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R. T. Parker-McGee

Charles Gore and the Theology of Priesthood

Abstract

The following dissertation is an investigation into the constitutive elements of a theology of priesthood to be found within the work of Charles Gore. Looking at Gore's thought over a whole range of theological areas, this dissertation advances Gore's theology of priesthood and develops his rich theological legacy with fresh insight into what he suggests the ordained priesthood may be called to be and do. As such it uncovers how the theology of priesthood is tied into Gore's entire theological vision, connecting to his accounts of the Church, the sacraments and the incarnation. It uncovers fresh aspects to Gore's understanding of the Church and its ministerial orders.

Charles Gore and the Theology of Priesthood

***Constitutive Elements of a Theology of Priesthood to be found
within the Theological Writings of Charles Gore***

In One Volume

By Robert Thomas Parker-McGee

MA by Research

The Department of Theology and Religion

Durham University

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Declaration

The Copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

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I also thank Sarah, Jasmine and Thomas for their support and patience.

Charles Gore and the Theology of Priesthood

Introduction

a) An Outline of this Dissertation and its Aspirations.

The following dissertation is an investigation into the constitutive elements of a theology of priesthood to be found within the work of one of the most enduring authorities on the subject: Charles Gore.

Charles Gore is commonly held to be one of the most significant theological thinkers of the turn of the twentieth century. He offers insights into all of the common themes of theological thought, and in so doing shows a remarkable intellect and an impressive dedication to the historical well of thinking from within the Christian tradition. According to Peter Waddell, 'Gore is a model of how to write theologically. His was a big mind, ranging freely over all the central theological themes and with a seamless vision of how theology, Christology, ecclesiology, sacraments, Scripture, ethics and politics all flowed into each other. Christians should read Gore today to see what a coherent vision looks like, and how being soaked in the ancient traditions of the Church fits one to interpret and engage modern society, culture and politics.'¹ This is some commendation and one I wholeheartedly support. From this standpoint, this dissertation looks to focus most intently upon one aspect of Gore's theological thought, the theology of priesthood.

It is my opinion that any investigation into incarnational theology, ecclesiology or theology of priesthood will be far richer as a result of exploring what Gore

¹ Peter Waddell, *Charles Gore: Radical Anglican* (London: Canterbury Press, 2014), p. xxxv

has to offer the discussion of these fields. Many theological investigations into Christology, ecclesiology and theology of priesthood make note of Gore's contributions to these areas of theological thought.² There are also a number of investigations that offer a more precise focus upon Gore's life and the wide scope of his theology.³ This research project will draw upon a wide selection of these works.

Nevertheless, it is my understanding that there has not to date been any extended investigation that has aspired to drawing a more complete theological understanding of Gore's theology of priesthood that has also included within it reflections on how that theology of priesthood relates to other aspects of his theological thought, such as the incarnation and the sacraments. Therefore, in the chapters that follow I am going to explore Gore's thought regarding the theology of priesthood, and I will for the first time show how the theology of priesthood is tied in to his whole theological vision, connecting to his accounts of the Church, the sacraments and the incarnation. This dissertation provides an original exegesis of Gore's work from this perspective, illuminating both his theology of priesthood and the other topics connected to it. This investigation will also uncover fresh aspects to Gore's

² e.g. C. Stephen Evans (ed.), *Exploring Kenotic Christology* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2006); Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, Gerald O'Collins (eds.), *The Incarnation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Arthur Michael Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1956 [1936]); Arthur Michael Ramsey, *An Era in Anglican Theology: From Gore to Temple* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2009 [1960]); Rowan Williams, *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000); Robin Ward, *On Christian Priesthood* (London: Continuum International Publishing, 2011); R. David Cox, *Priesthood in a New Millennium: Towards an Understanding of Anglican Presbyterate in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Church Publishing Inc., 2004); George Guiver et al., *The Fire and the Clay: The Priest in Today's Church* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1993)

³ e. g. James Carpenter, *Gore: A Study in Liberal Catholic Thought* (London: The Faith Press, 1960); Ramsey, *An Era in Anglican Theology* (2009 [1960]); Gordon Crosse, *Charles Gore: A Biographical Sketch* (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co, 1932); Waddell, *Charles Gore: Radical Anglican* (2014)

understanding of the Church and its ministerial orders. Looking at Gore's thought over a whole range of theological areas, I hope to further advance Gore's theology of priesthood, developing Gore's rich theological legacy with fresh insight into what he suggests the ordained priesthood may be called to be and do.

It should be noted that this investigation is chiefly concerned with uncovering the constituent factors of Gore's wider theology of the priesthood and as such is an original exegesis of his work. It is not chiefly concerned with my own independent historical or theological work on the theology of priesthood, which would prove a distraction from this dissertation's main purpose. Only if I consider it to be advantageous to the uncovering and explaining of Gore's thinking will this work include wider theological or historical claims.⁴ On the whole, however, this study will not get too heavily side-tracked into any controversy that might be presently debated regarding any particular area of Gore's thought or his historical perspective.

In order to convey Gore's theology of priesthood most completely, I will divide Gore's thinking into three significant chapters and a concluding chapter. The first chapter will focus upon Gore's work on the incarnation and will do so with a special focus towards its consequent factors for a theology of priesthood. The second chapter will move into exploring Gore's own historical investigation into the scriptural and theological grounding for the Church and its ministry. The third chapter will then look at Gore's sacramental and liturgical understanding of the Church and reveal the importance he places upon a

⁴ by way of noting that Gore's claims may be controversial in the context of either his contemporary situation or modern scholarship

sacramental imperative being central to a theology of ordained ministry. This dissertation will then conclude with a systematic round-up of what has been discovered in each chapter, before then moving into a brief reflection upon what Gore's thinking may have to offer three significant contemporary issues concerning the Church's understanding of ordained ministry today.

As we move forward through our exploration, we will see how Gore weaves what he discovers in the biblical texts into a deep and rich ecclesiology by drawing from multiple eras of the Christian tradition.

In the first chapter, we will discover how Gore understands that Christ enables humanity to know God more completely, and we will investigate in what way Gore understands Christ reuniting the flesh to spiritual purity.

In that same chapter, we will explore how Gore considers Christ to be a model of perfect and uncorrupted humanity and reveals how one may come to know God better. We will then answer the question of how Christ repairs the previously broken relationship. We will discover how Gore understands the Old Law and Levitical Priesthood being fulfilled in Christ by him presenting a refreshed understanding of the priestly life. Then we will consider what this priestly example may look like and in what way Gore sees Christ exhibiting high-priestly credentials.

From this standpoint, we will explore how Gore considers it a significant feature of Christ's priestly nature that he advances humanity towards perfect union through his sacrificial life and priesthood. We will find Gore revealing how Christ offers a refreshed understanding of the priestly life, grounded in service and grace, rather than law; and how this priestly life ushers in a new

era of moral justice based upon compassion and forgiveness, where a new form of relationship with God is working within us through the Spirit. Thus, we will see how Christ's priestly credentials are important in order for humanity to enter more readily into relationship with God, enhancing our spiritual sight as he does so.

Furthermore, we will find Gore describing how, as believers in the divine revelation, he believes us reworked and healed by the life of Christ working in us through the Spirit as a result of our inclusion in the Church body. We will then see how the Church's ministerial orders look to the example of Christ, promoting those attributes discernible through his priestly existence, so that they may be used in God's service to bring more people into the eternal life only found in Christ. Finally, we will begin to grapple with Gore's concept of the Church as an 'extension of the incarnation',⁵ embodying the principles of Christ and infusing the lives of its members with his life.

In the second chapter, we will explore how Gore interprets the scriptural evidence as revealing how the Church is divinely instituted by Christ who shows clear intentionality regarding how the Church is to develop; how the Church is created as God's action in the world and not a construct of human invention; and why Gore concludes that divine direction sits at the very centre of the Church's formation. We will investigate the things that Gore considers are necessary for common unity, his concept of the visible church and the basis for claims regarding apostolic succession and the threefold ministry. We

⁵ Charles Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God; Being the Brampton Lectures for the Year 1891* (London: John Murray, 1893 [1891]), p. 219

will also explore the place that local difference and diversity plays in Gore's understanding of the Church and its ministerial orders.

As we move further into the second chapter, we will track Gore's historical account of the threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons and how he considers bishops end up acquiring the authority of apostolic oversight. We will also consider his contribution to how the Church may go about the task of discerning callings to the threefold ministerial offices of the Church. From this position, we will see how Gore considers ordination to be a significant part of the process; how God works through the bishop at ordination to bestow something of the Spirit of Christ's priesthood upon the person being ordained and how this brings about an ontological change within the individual. We will also see how Christ's priesthood remains unique and exemplary with each ordained bishop, priest or deacon drawing their ministry from his.

In the third chapter we will explore how Gore understands the Church, through its ordained ministry, to have a responsibility for preserving what Christ instituted and passing it on to each new generation, authenticity resting in the actions and instructions of Christ himself. We will then explore why, to Gore, ordained ministry must follow the example of Christ's priesthood and be grounded in a sacramental imperative. It is from here that we will ponder how Gore sees the Eucharist (and other sacraments) as transcending the limits of time and space and what relation they have to uniting the gathered body within Christ's prophetic, priestly and kingly action. Then, we will see how, sharing in Christ's priesthood, the ordained ministry helps the earthly church body participate in those eternal realities.

As we move further into the third chapter, we will investigate the two significant aspects Gore considers are discernible in every sacrament: they all use material objects to communicate spiritual grace and they are all communal by nature and thus social ceremonies. This will lead us on to ponder the part that communal concern plays in Gore's theological vision and what consequences this has for his view of more individualistic interpretations of faith.

From here, we will explore the importance Gore places upon sacramental and social concerns for the identity of the ordained priesthood. We will also consider whether or not Gore considers the ordained priesthood to be an elite caste and what place the baptismal priesthood plays in his overall theological vision of the Church.

Finally, as we conclude our investigation, we will ponder what Gore's insight may offer three most pressing contemporary issues concerning the theology of priesthood; namely, individualism, obsession with task and experientialism.

Before we move to exploring all of this, however, it may prove useful to have some idea of the significant events of Charles Gore's life. In the hope that it may help the reader to paint a brief picture of his life, here is a brief biography of Charles Gore:

b) A Biographical Sketch of Charles Gore

Charles Gore was born in 1853 in Wimbledon. He was born into an Anglo-Irish family as the third son of the Honourable Charles Alexander Gore and Augusta Lavinia Priscilla (née Ponsonby). He was privileged in his upbringing and had a childhood of relative ease. His great-grandfather on his father's side was the

Earl of Arran, whilst his great-grandfather on his mother's side was the Earl of Bessborough. His eldest brother, Phillip Gore became the fourth Earl of Arran and another brother, Spencer Gore, was to become England's first National Tennis Champion.

From a young age, Charles Gore showed a considerable independence of mind and spirit, partly no doubt fed by his aristocratic upbringing. As he grew this developed into a strong self-confidence. Even at the age of nine or ten, Gore began questioning elements of his inherited situation and was soon to find that the family Low Church tradition failed to satisfy his religious and intellectual leanings. He soon felt that a more sacramental religion was for him and later in his teenage years began attending churches in London that offered a richer sacramental ceremonial.

Gore attended Harrow School and it was here that he became influenced by Brooke Foss Westcott. According to Carpenter, Westcott especially impressed upon Gore the need for exact scholarship, the insight to be gained from religious history, and the spiritual benefits of simple living and loving the poor.⁶

At Balliol College, Oxford, he became a supporter of the trade-union movement and he took a First Class Honours Degree in Classical Moderations and the Greats (philosophy). Whilst he was there he encountered a much changed Oxford from that of a few decades earlier. Opening up the university to those outside of the Church of England had widened the parameters of

⁶ Carpenter, *Gore: A Study in Liberal Catholic Thought* (1960)

enquiry. The Church was forced to immediately take note of some of these advances and Gore played a big part in this scholarly response from within.

He was elected a Fellow of Trinity in 1875, where he lectured on Plato's republic and tutored students in the Greek New Testament. It was here that Gore became a part of a group of scholars who were actively seeking to bring about a revolution in thinking within the Church. Taking the title the Holy Party, this group consisted of Henry Scott Holland, Edward S. Talbot, J. R. Illingworth, Frances Paget, Aubrey Moore, R. L. Ottley, W. Lock, Arthur Lyttleton, R. C. Moberly and W. J. H. Champion. They eventually produced the ground-breaking *Lux Mundi*, which sought to offer fresh and new perspectives on theological themes associated with the incarnation. Subsequently, this group contributed to one of the most productive eras of Anglican theology to date.

Gore was ordained to the priesthood in 1878 and in 1880 he became Vice-Principal of Cuddesdon Theological College. In 1883, Gore became the first Principal of Pusey House, Oxford.

In 1888, Gore wrote *The Church and the Ministry*, reflecting upon the origins of the Christian Ministry and its development in the first two centuries of Christianity. In the same year, he wrote *Roman Catholic Claims*, a response to Roman Catholic claims that the Anglican Church was not a valid successor of the New Testament Church. He then helped to found the Christian Social Union in 1889 and his political views began arousing some public protest.

He was to be at the centre of further controversy in 1889 when *Lux Mundi* (meaning "Light of the World"): *A Series of Studies in the Religion of the*

Incarnation, was finally released. Gore was its general editor, and provided a single essay within it. Overall, the book was a response to the increasing call from many educated Christians for the Church to begin taking account of Biblical and archaeological studies and scientific discoveries, which they felt made it necessary for the Church to re-examine and perhaps restate some of its traditional formulations. This aroused a remarkable amount of interest and caused no little amount of controversy. Many claimed that it went too far and instead of restating traditional doctrines, it completely rewrote them. The book was widely read. Soon cheap editions were available and its readership grew even further.

In 1887, Gore founded the Society of the Resurrection, an association for priests looking to deepen the spiritual life.

In Lent 1891, Gore was invited to deliver the annual Bampton Lecture Series. This was his chance to clarify his stance. The University Church of Oxford was full to bursting with people filling pews, pulpit and standing in isles to hear him talk. A few months later, the lectures were published as *The Incarnation of the Son of God*. This book presents his most comprehensive thinking on the incarnation and sets down all the common themes of his thinking that he would later revisit in subsequent writings. It is in this book that Gore first associates the Church as being 'an extension of the incarnation'.⁷ This later took up wide support in many circles.

⁷ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 219

In 1892, the Society of the Resurrection became the Community of the Resurrection, with six priests looking to live the religious life. It began life based at Pusey House and Gore became the Community's Senior.

In 1893, Gore left Pusey House to become Vicar of Radley. Gore felt that Pusey House was not a suitable home for the Community of the Resurrection and he encouraged a change of location. And so the Community of the Resurrection moved to Radley. Alas, Gore never really settled to life as a vicar in a small village and in 1894 Gore was made a canon of Westminster Abbey. This also ended his personal relationship with the Community of the Resurrection. Nonetheless, it probably began the most fulfilling period of his ministry.

Whilst at Westminster, Gore's sermons and teaching was legendary and people would arrive hours in advance just to ensure that they could get a seat. In addition to his Sunday sermons, he also gave weekday lectures. Many of these were later published as books: *The Sermon on the Mount* (1896), *The Epistle to The Ephesians* (1897), *The Epistle to the Romans* (1898).

The Community of the Resurrection subsequently began a separate journey that would eventually lead to it settling in Mirfield, a small industrial town in West Yorkshire. The Community of the Resurrection continued to grow throughout the early twentieth-century. Gore did not accompany it on this second stage of its journey. Nonetheless, what had begun as a small group of priests looking to deepen their piety became a significant contributor to the

holiness of the Church, later forming missional communities in South Africa, Rhodesia,⁸ Wales and the West Indies.

In 1901, Gore wrote one of his most significant books called the *Body of Christ*, which dealt with the Eucharist. In it he asserted the doctrine that Christ was present in the Sacrament and that the Eucharist was a sacrifice. However, he also discounted certain late mediaeval practices such as processions of the Sacrament, which he claimed was unknown to the Primitive Church. True to form, this book was once again controversial and divided opinion.

In 1901, Gore was appointed as Bishop of Worcester. This came as a complete shock to him and angered his opponents. Some were concerned at his apparent Anglo-Catholic views. Others were alarmed at his dedication to rational thought and socialist sympathies. Gore began overseeing the division of Worcester Diocese, which was an unwieldy diocese and included the now vast and sprawling industrial area of Birmingham. Gore recognised the need to carve out a separate diocese for Birmingham alone. In 1905, Gore became the first bishop of this new bishopric. Gore proved to be a brilliant bishop in this new diocese. Church attendance grew considerably, new churches were built, and many priests were imported into the diocese to serve the growing congregations.

In 1911, Gore was transferred to become Bishop of Oxford. In this post, Gore especially proved himself well suited to the role of bishop, performing good oversight and caring for his clergy.

⁸ Modern day Zimbabwe

Over the next few years increasing numbers of Anglican clergy began declaring that reasonably denying the virgin birth and the physical Resurrection of Christ should not in any way affect them remaining Anglican. Gore was so mortified that he suggested resigning his bishopric in order to attend properly to the task of challenging their stance. His friends convinced him that the best way to proceed was to continue as a bishop, which he subsequently did.

After the First World War, Gore resigned his bishopric and retired in 1919 at 66 years of age. Numerous posts and accolades followed in religious and academic bodies. During his retirement years he continued to write and publish prolifically on the whole span of his theological thought.

c) A Note on Charles Gore's Approach

Gore often approaches his task with apparent competing demands lurking in the background. He is in many ways conservative in his thinking,⁹ and yet in others undeniably liberal. He is adamant that the integrity of the Christian tradition must be upheld and yet at the same time he is completely committed to modern investigative techniques and academic thinking challenging the Church's traditional theological understandings. Gore is also steadfastly committed to the Church maintaining its traditional structuring under the threefold ministerial order and apostolic succession, and yet is convinced of the need for local churches to be able to adapt according to cultural and sociological variation. In short, as we advance this work we will note how Gore refuses to take shortcuts either in his thinking or his attempts to arrive at an

⁹ This becomes more prominent as he advances with age.

answer that is intellectually acceptable to him. This does not always make for a simplistic theological outcome to the issues that he perceives need addressing and sometimes there are small contradictions in what he produces as a result.

There is something specific about Gore's historical situation that we also need to note. In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the idea developed (most prominently in Germany but then also in England and elsewhere) that the world of scholarship was made up of a number of interdependent disciplines, that those disciplines were constantly advancing, and that their work was concerned with areas outside of the service of theology. In response to this, Gore approaches his task with a degree of faithfulness to the theological tradition whilst remaining open to the advances of various scholarly disciplines. Gore believed that all disciplines were interrelated because there was only one reality, one world, one humanity which all disciplines were called to advance, expound and explore. To Gore's mind, theology would only be further enriched by taking account of wider scholarly advance.

Gore also writes at a time when it was common custom to use man or mankind as a gender neutral term meaning humanity or humankind. He also writes at a time in history when only men were allowed to be ordained to the priesthood. We must understand therefore, that when we read quotes from Gore from our twenty-first century contemporary perspective, some of his language can sound gender biased. I personally feel enormously uncomfortable with such use of language, but for the sake of scholarly accuracy all quotations will need to be included in their original form as we progress through this dissertation. I would argue that his conclusions about priesthood transcend limitations of

gender and therefore have significant contemporary significance for all those ordained into Christ's Church.

As we read biographical sketches of Gore, we begin to see a well-educated, deep seated Anglican of high intellectual capacity who was surrounded by notable academic figures.¹⁰ These all had a great influence upon his thinking and his work. Gore was so determined to embrace the new ideas and scholarly advances around him that he found himself defending his beliefs on two fronts. He was determined to rise to the challenge posed by these scholarly advances whilst being equally minded to remain true to his theological integrity. He was convinced that all true, measured and thoughtful intellectual advances would ultimately strengthen inherited religion. In a statement calling for the same kind of intellectual rigour to be applied to theology as to the field of science, Gore states: 'we must look as faithfully at the Christ of Christian tradition who is declared the revelation of the Father, as we do look at the phenomenon of nature'.¹¹ This statement is suggestive of the much older idea of revelation being found in two books – the book of scripture and the book of nature. As is his fashion, Gore gives this more traditional way of thinking a thoroughly 19th Century makeover. As we move through this project, we will see Gore applying this kind of approach to a whole plethora of theological themes.

In this way, Gore's work retains a conservative interpretation of doctrine in general whilst emitting a certain late-Victorian catholic liberalism in its use of techniques of enquiry, and even on occasion in its promptings for how Christianity should approach the use of these doctrinal truths in society. This

¹⁰ Crosse, *Charles Gore – A Biographical Sketch* (1932) & Carpenter, *Gore – A Study in Liberal Catholic Thought* (1960), pp. 7- 41

¹¹ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p.30

leads Carpenter to claim that 'there is no getting round the fact that Gore used the term liberal Catholicism as the most fitting description of his aim and approach in theology'.¹² The doctrine of the incarnation was no exception and this provides a fundamental platform to Gore's overall theological vision. Gore and a band of other notable theologians, who come to be known as the Lux Mundi School,¹³ understood the incarnation to be the key to Christian faith as they expended much energy ensuring that the Church moved into the twentieth century with a solid theological foundation to build on. It seems most natural therefore that we begin our investigation from that standpoint. Thus we will now move into our first chapter and explore Gore's theology of the incarnation being especially mindful towards elements of a theology of priesthood discernible within it.

¹² Carpenter, *Charles Gore – A Study in Liberal Catholic Thought* (1960), pp. 42 - 61

¹³ These included: H. S. Holland, Aubrey Moore, J. R. Illingworth, E. S. Talbot, R. C. Moberley, Arthur Lyttelton, Charles Gore, Walter Lock, Francis Paget, W. J. H. Campion, R. L. Ottley

Chapter 1: The Incarnation and Priesthood

a) Introduction

Charles Gore's theological outlook is rooted in a deep theology of the incarnation. For Gore, the entire Christian faith begins and ends in the person of Christ. In his opinion, the better one comes to understand the intricacies of Jesus Christ and the consequences of his being both man and God, the closer one may move to a more complete realisation of God's plan for the salvation of humankind. Gore considers the Church to be the 'Body of Christ'. Following the incarnation, it is the next step in the divine masterplan for salvation; 'the extension and perpetuation of the incarnation in the world'.¹⁴ Bearing this bold statement in mind, this chapter will consider significant aspects of Gore's thought on the incarnation, and discern what elements may be characteristic of Jesus' priestly ministry. In so doing, it will consider elements of Christ's personality, nature and approach to realising God's salvific plan. Through Gore's thinking, we will explore what implications this has for the Church's ministerial orders and why Christ's example of priesthood is so important as a blueprint for any ministry carried out in his name. By the end of the chapter, we will have a clearer understanding of what Gore considers Christ's approach and example to be, and in like manner, attributes that are important for authentic undertaking of Christian priesthood in Christ's name.

¹⁴ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God; being the Brampton Lectures for the Year 1891* (1893 [1891]), p. 219

b) The Necessity of the Incarnation

Throughout Gore's work, we see a concern to uphold a certain amount of theological integrity concerning the incarnation. As such, he is mindful of two competing demands: to help develop thinking around the nature and importance of the incarnation in response to the scientific advances of his day, whilst remaining true to the Church's accepted inherited tradition and theological understanding. He is concerned that what he develops must stand up to intellectual scrutiny. Famously, it was *Lux Mundi* that set the ball rolling in 1889, as Gore joined other notable scholars¹⁵ to examine issues relating to the incarnation,¹⁶ but it is in the Bampton lectures of 1891, entitled 'The incarnation of the Son of God', that Gore produces his most expansive work on the subject.¹⁷ It is Ramsey's opinion that, 'in this book we see Gore's teaching throughout his life, and we also see an opening up of a line of exposition of the incarnation which was, in the main, to be followed in Anglican theology for many years to come'.¹⁸ This extensive work influenced much of Gore's later thought, and it is certainly true that the particular flavour of theology of the incarnation that he develops remains an influence upon Christological thinking to this day.

As is so often true of Gore's investigations, in order to understand where he begins with his theological exploration of Christ, we need to implant ourselves

¹⁵ Later to be known as the *Lux Mundi* School

¹⁶ Charles Gore (ed.), *Lux Mundi: A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation*. Fifth Edition, (London: John Murray, 1890 [1889])

¹⁷ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891])

¹⁸ Ramsey, *An Era in Anglican Theology* (2009 [1960]), p. 16: Ramsey continues on page 16 to state that, 'It is almost a commonplace that a theology of Incarnation prevailed in Anglican divinity from the last decade of the reign of Queen Victoria until well into the new (20th) century. This was due in part to the prophetic teaching of Westcott upon the incarnation and social progress, and in part to the dogmatic teaching of the *Lux Mundi* School.'

into patristic teaching; notably, in this instance, the thought of Athanasius.¹⁹ Athanasius considers humanity to have been created to be in relationship with God, who is divine goodness. Drawing upon the Alexandrian cosmological vision, where being requires drawing upon God's goodness, Athanasius considers humanity to be made from nothingness and so believes that without God humanity would descend back into nothingness.²⁰ From this understanding, Athanasius sees evidence of a separation between God and humankind beginning from the time of the Fall and increasing up until the incarnation of Christ.²¹

Gore seems to concur with Athanasius' thinking, when he considers humanity to have been created in God's image, but to have turned away from God and thereby causing a separation from its true nature. Gore considers God to be of the highest moral character, what he describes as 'perfect reality'.²² We get a sense of Gore walking a kind of platonic, imaginative landscape, with degrees of reality (or goodness) that increase as humanity approaches the source (God).²³ Therefore, humanity's turning away is a denial of the very moral laws that provide humanity with life.²⁴ Gore sees evidence for his stance in the story of the Fall, which he considers describes humanity's helplessness and increasing alienation from the goodness of God. Gore interprets humanity before the Fall as living in perfect relation to God, but following the Fall that

¹⁹ In 'The Incarnation of the Son of God', Gore uses Tertullian, Justin Martyr, Dionysius of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, Athanasius, Ignatius, Clement and other notable theologians of the early church as examples and influences in developing his theological thought. Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), pp. 49, 100, 101...

²⁰ Athanasius, *On The Incarnation, I: III & IV*, Penelope Lawson (trans.), (New York: Macmillan, 2011 [1981]), p. 14

²¹ Athanasius, *On The Incarnation, III: XII*, (2011 [1981]), p. 26 - 27

²² Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 112

²³ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), pp. 30, 34 – 36, 115 - 116, 112

²⁴ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 34

union is broken. Following the Fall humanity continually chooses the path of rebellion (sin). To Gore, the Old Testament is a narrative of God's self-revelation: revealing himself little by little, through his prophets and authors, in order to help repair the brokenness. Humanity, on the other hand, seems to repeatedly turn in the opposite direction, further entrenching the separation. Along with this separation, humans' disordered desires see them produce idols for themselves to alleviate their longing for God's goodness rather than return to it.²⁵ And so, confused and blinded by evil, humanity finds it harder to receive the divine goodness because of the barriers they themselves have created. God, having felt displeasure at the state of creation, offers restoration through Christ who is able to reverse humanity's course towards self-destruction.

Gore interprets the present human condition as filled with depravity and correspondingly we begin to recognise that Gore considers the human state to be in a very dark place were it not for the salvific grace of God: humanity would face a completely hopeless future were it not for God's own compassionate and restorative action. 'We have to recognise...', he says, 'that human nature as we have had experience of it in history, presents in great measure a sense of moral ruin'.²⁶ To Gore, humanity would be entirely lost were it not for God's own intervention in the person of Christ, who redeems humanity.²⁷ Gore is convinced that: 'The divine method of this redemption is,

²⁵ Exodus 32: 2 - 10

²⁶ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 36

²⁷ Charles Gore, *The Permanent Creed and the Christian Idea of Sin: being two sermons preached before the University of Oxford on November 13, 1904, and December 13, 1903*, (London: John Murray, 1905), Chapter II

so to speak, from within the human race itself (*Christ*). It is a new creative act of God restoring in human nature a moral creation which had been ruined'.²⁸

In short, Gore considers humanity's condition corrupted, a long way from the divine goodness. Demonic powers of evil distort the human image and we are caught in a real battle over the substance of creation. In the background, Gore seems continually to wrestle with the question of whether creation will be pulled into evaporation or won into goodness. To his mind, the former would surely be true were it not for Christ's redemptive, transformative and salvific credentials: Christ is the miracle cure for a terminally ill world.²⁹

Gore believes that Christ in his human form does not come to approve the messiness of fallen humanity, but to reunite the flesh to spiritual purity, a purity similar to what it experienced in Eden, so that humanity may once again experience holistic completeness through its earthly pilgrimage. As we will discover later, this is why, for Gore, Christ's sinless nature is an important reality of Christ's personhood. Christ does not come to comfort humanity and implant it deeper into the sins of the flesh, but to offer a challenge to the status quo, and with it a route out of its destructive tendencies towards a purer state. Christ re-orientates our outlook to bring about an objective change to our situation so that we may experience unity with the Father. He does this by his

²⁸ Gore, *The Permanent Creed and the Christian Idea of Sin* (1905), Chapter II

²⁹ As a point of interest, we should note here something important about Gore's theological anthropology. Interestingly, he does not consider humanity as animal in origin needing to be directed towards a purer spiritual path, but instead spiritual in origin and needing to be restored from the corruption of evil and sin. From this stance, Gore considers all sin to be 'rebellion' against God. He says: 'sin at the origin of our human life, as through all its history, was treason to our higher capacity, which made man the slave of the flesh. The 'slave of the flesh' because he was not meant to be an animal, he was meant to be a spiritual being.' Charles Gore, 'On the Christian Doctrine of Sin', in *Lux Mundi: A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation*, Gore (ed.), Tenth Edition (London: John Murray, 1902), p. 392.

very presence with us, and by his example and teaching which leads us towards a higher spiritual and moral good.

But how does Christ exact this? Why should Christ's presence and example prove so instrumental and unique?

Well, to Gore's mind, only Christ fulfils the necessary conditions to mend the broken relationship. As Gore expounds, 'Christ enters not merely to consummate an order but to restore it, not to accomplish only but to redeem'.³⁰ Christ consummates it, restores it, perfects it, and makes it complete by himself becoming flesh so that humanity may relate more readily to him. In so doing, he offers reconciliation to the Father, restoring the once broken relationship. Through his unique and perfect existence, Christ accomplishes that which he designs by redeeming, saving, liberating humanity from its perilous path towards self-destruction. And so the 'development of God's revelation of himself comes to its climax in the Incarnation' of Christ.³¹

Be that as it may, Gore is careful to maintain a juxtaposition in his thinking here. First, using strong revelatory language, he sees this as a necessary process of revelation; fundamentally stemming from a problem of knowledge: Christ offers the means to come to know God better. Equally, however, Gore recognises a problem of relationship too, with humanity requiring reconciliation with the Father through the Son, because as he says: 'the personal relation to himself is from first to last the essence of the religion which he inaugurated'.³² There is then the dual concern of repairing a broken relationship and

³⁰ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 36

³¹ Charles Gore, *The Church and the Ministry*, Revised by C. H. Turner (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1949 [1886]), p. 6

³² Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 9

reorienting a disobedient order back towards God's goodness. Both find their assurance in Christ. The incarnation draws creation into the life of the Spirit. It shows us what God is like, opening him up to creation so that it may know him more fully, whilst also reconciling creation back to God by re-establishing the means by which it may enter back into relationship with him.

Gore believes that Christ, by his presence, points towards and reveals that highest spiritual and moral good that is God, and infuses in us the divine life as seen through the Son. Reflecting on this, Gore states: 'Christ's Flesh and Blood were not merely offered on my behalf, but are also given to be my inward substance, my new life'.³³ By making God more fully known, Christ not only opens the way to improving relations with him and shows how previous divisions caused by disobedience may be reconciled, he also infuses our life with his. Like Athanasius, Gore seems to picture something much deeper going on within us as a result of Christ's work. Gore says; '...when he (Christ) left the earth he promised to sustain them from the unseen world by his continued personal presence and to communicate to them his own life, and he assured them that at the last they would find themselves face to face with him as their judge'.³⁴ Gore pictures us being reworked, even healed, by the life of Christ working in us through the Spirit as a result of our inclusion in the Church body, through which God the Creator is causing new life to grow and flourish.

Building on this, Gore considers that Christ is the fulfilment of the Old Testament, and the second volume of the divine revelation. All that God had

³³ Charles Gore, *A Word for Peace on Justification, being a letter to the Rev. Harry Williams of the Church Mission Society*, in Oxford Mission Tracts, No XI (London: E Berryman and Co, 1884); See also Waddell, *Charles Gore: Radical Anglican* (2014), pp. 40 - 42

³⁴ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 9

revealed of himself in those earlier times is brought into completion in the incarnation.³⁵ It is not that Christ rewrites what has gone before. Far from it; in Christ not a single one of the earlier revelations of God's person is altered, but all are brought to completion in Him. This Gore describes as 'the fuller exposition of the divine character, the divine personality, the divine love'.³⁶ He believes that in Christ we see the ultimate and most complete revelation of the attributes of God.

This is significant for our exploration of priesthood. Whilst in the Old Testament we see revelations of the unchangeable God, the Old Law and Levitical Priesthood prove incapable of bringing about humanity's reconciliation and union with God. Christ offers a refreshed understanding of priestly life grounded in service and grace, rather than law. He ushers in a new era of moral justice based upon compassion and forgiveness, where a new form of relationship with God is working within us in the New Covenant through the work of the Spirit. For this reason, Gore presents Christ as the quintessence of the sacrificial life and priesthood. We see in him a crescendo of moral authority, affording him the position of great and eternal high priest.³⁷ Gore considers this priestly life and example essential for the salvation of humanity.

Gore understands the Levitical examples of priesthood throughout the Old Testament as an attempt to bring about reconciliation with God. They try to provide the means by which reconciliation and reunion can take place. Prior to the Fall humanity was already in satisfactory relationship with the divine, but

³⁵ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 53

³⁶ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 17

³⁷ Charles Gore, *The Body of Christ: An Enquiry into the Institution and Doctrine of Holy Communion* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), pp. 212, 252 – 253; & Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 5

following the Fall the priesthood materialises over time as the order entrusted with the task of instilling in humanity the necessary obedience to move closer to God once again. It seems that Gore believes humanity prior to the Fall to have been more readily able to authentically express the attributes of union and reconciliation. In Gore's understanding, there seems to be something innately priestly about humanity's pre-fallen identity. It is these same attributes that the later Levitical priesthood attempt to re-instil in God's people, albeit ineffectually. As further separation occurs with each passing generation, the requirements relating to the Levitical priestly office become more and more complex as it tries to redirect an increasingly disobedient Israel back towards God. But all the time humanity's relationship with God becomes progressively more estranged because of its wilful disobedience. The problem is considered by Gore only to be partly one of knowledge (a lack of the kind of knowledge about God that Christ would bring). For Gore, there was also a deeper problem: lacking the power of God working within to bring reconciliation about.

It is clear in Gore's understanding that Christ's priestly life provides the means for such reconciliation. Christ, through his priesthood, achieves what the Levitical model is incapable of, and provides the means by which humanity may be reunited to God. Christ somewhat opens the possibility for humanity to grasp its pre-fallen identity. More than that, something about Christ's uncorrupted credentials enables his expression of priesthood to be more effective than anything that went before. His life, example and teaching draws followers into his divine life and in turn implants the divine life within his followers, drawing them back into the eternal fulfilment of the Triune God.

Gore believes that Christ's high priesthood is significant for humanity's salvation.³⁸ Christ expresses a pure model of priesthood precisely because he genuinely and truly shares his perfect life with us, by the Spirit. Christ's priesthood is distinguished from the earlier Levitical priesthood because Christ's human life is in full union with God, and so morally perfect. God by sharing this humanity of Christ with us, and making it take root within us, by the Spirit, is uniting us all to himself. Thus, in comparing Christianity to Old Testament Israel, Gore asserts that: 'The Christian Church is in an infinitely higher sense a royal priesthood, a holy nation'.³⁹

So, what are the elements that make up his pure priestly example?

Well, for Gore, living life in full union with the Father combined with full obedience, unpolluted moral grounding and a completely pure spiritual vision are significant aspects of what he sees revealed in the incarnate Christ. Christ is the authoritative revelation of truth about God, and the decisive reorientation of desire towards God. He is the provision of an uncorrupted human nature in union with God and thus in him humanity sees the re-establishment of good standing in a previously fractured relationship. This enables a clearer spiritual vision where the true essence of God may be seen. 'The incarnation', says Gore, 'represents necessarily a climax in the divine self-revelation. It represents this necessarily because no closer relation of God to man is conceivable than that involved in the "Word – who is God – made flesh" in the

³⁸ Gore, *The Body of Christ* (1901), pp. 212, 252 – 253; & Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God*, (1893 [1891]), p. 5

³⁹ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 73

historical person, Christ Jesus, in such a sense that “he who hath seen Him hath seen the Father”^{.40}

We have moved a long way in a short time and so it might be helpful at this point just to pause, take a breath and recap on what we have established so far. We have explored how Gore considers God to be moral perfection, representing perfect reality and goodness. Gore sees humanity in moral peril as a result of turning away and fracturing its relationship with the goodness of God, beginning at the Fall. By his life, example and teaching, Christ opens the way for the divine life to work within us and reveals that highest spiritual and moral good that is God – the source of all life. Christ enables humanity to know God more completely and opens up the means to enter more fully into relationship with him through actual living union, where spiritual infirmity may be healed: he offers a remedy for the morally corrupted world and thus a route back into the divine relationship.

From here, we saw how Gore considers Christ fulfilling the Old Law and Levitical Priesthood by exhibiting a refreshed understanding of priestly life based on moral purity, integrity and service. He ushers in a new era of moral justice based upon compassion and forgiveness. This is how, according to Gore, Christ exhibits high priestly credentials: a crescendo of moral authority and a perfect standard of sacrificial life and priesthood. His life and example is essential for humanity’s salvation.

In order to deepen our understanding around these claims, we next need to explore in more depth specific aspects of Gore’s thinking around the

⁴⁰ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 6

incarnation. What are its principal characteristics? What evidence does Gore use to support his claims? Why does it make a difference to our understanding of priesthood? In attempting to answer some of these questions from Gore's perspective, our investigation will now move to consider how Gore interprets the evidence to be found in scripture, the creeds and the natural world. We will then look at how these provide the basis for Gore's belief in Christ's supernatural and miraculous credentials.

c) The Incarnation; Natural and Supernatural

Gore considers his thinking consistent with the historical legacy found in scripture and the creeds. He makes clear his belief that the documents of the New Testament provide clear evidence for the truth claims of the doctrine of the incarnation and he uses numerous New Testament examples to support his claims.⁴¹ Characteristic of his era and holding true to his ideals, Gore is also keen to try and reconcile the patristic evidence with the growing contemporary interest in the historical person of Christ.⁴² In so doing, he remains steadfast in his belief that the creeds and much of the patristic legacy

⁴¹ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 59: Gore offers the following evidence; Rom. 1: 7, Rom.9: 5 (*Christ called God over all*), 1 Cor. 1: 3, Rom. 10: 9 - 14 (*Christ as Lord = Jehovah of OT*), 2 Cor. 13 - 14 (*Co-ordination of Christ with the Father*), Gal. 4: 4 (*God's own Son, incarnate*), 1 Cor. 8: 6 (*Christ in creation*), 1 Cor. 10: 4 (*Christ with the Jews in the wilderness*), 1 Cor. 15: 47 (*from Heaven*), Rom. 1: 3 - 4 (*disclosing His Godhead through His manhood*).

⁴² At the time of Gore's writing, the decisions of the ecumenical councils were beginning to be questioned and the creeds were coming under an increasingly critical lens. Many, like Mackintosh, were beginning to question some of the Christological formulae and even the definitions used within them to describe the Incarnation. Mackintosh felt that philosophy had moved on to render the statement in the Chalcedon Creed 'of one substance with the Father', to be problematic when speaking of Christ. See, for example, Hugh Ross Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ* (New York: C. Scribner's sons, 1914), p 323: For Gore's full response see: Charles Gore, *The Reconstruction of Belief: Belief in God, Belief in Christ, The Holy Spirit and the Church* (London: John Murray, 1926), pp. 848 - 863

only express dogmatic and theological realities consistent with scripture. He says:

The dogmatic decisions of the councils are formulas rendered necessary for no other purpose than to guard the faith of scripture from what was calculated to undermine it. They do not make any addition to its substance, but bring out into light and emphasis some of its most important principles.⁴³

Gore is clear that the overall picture provided by the patristic legacy is one of consistency and truth about the person of Jesus Christ. To underline this argument, Gore explores the Chalcedonian Creed and identifies four main principles behind the creedal statement concerning the incarnation, designed to protect believers from error. These, he claims, are also consistent throughout patristic literature and the New Testament evidence:

- 1) 'That as Son of God, Jesus Christ is very God, of one substance with the Father.'⁴⁴
- 2) 'That as Son of Man, he is perfectly Man, in the completeness of human faculties and sympathies.'⁴⁵
- 3) 'That though both God and man, he is yet one person, namely the Son of God who has taken manhood into himself.'⁴⁶
- 4) 'That in this incarnation the manhood, though it is truly assumed into the divine person, still remains none the less truly human, so that Jesus

⁴³ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 81. Gore is adopting here one particular account of the development of doctrine, at a time when many different thoughts entered the debate. See for example, Gerald Parsons (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain: II Controversies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988)

⁴⁴ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), pp. 80 - 81

⁴⁵ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), pp. 80 - 81

⁴⁶ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), pp. 80 - 81

Christ is of one substance with us men in respect of His manhood, as he is with the Father in respect of His Godhead.⁴⁷

It is not surprising to see Gore taking an orthodox Christological stance when it comes to these creedal texts, albeit in a rather simplified form.⁴⁸ He sees in them negative safeguards consistent with the Jesus portrayed in scripture. This is important, because he considers that this consistency itself provides the evidence of who Christ is. This consistency in the overall portrayal of who Christ is enables humanity to become intimate with his personhood and relate better to him. But to Gore, it is Christ's high priestly credentials that enable humanity to begin encountering God in a most profound way, quite unlike anything since Eden.

Added to this, Gore believes that the consistent portrayal of Christ found in the scriptural and patristic evidence does not make the person of Christ inconsistent with nature. In his attempts to explain this, we see Gore's thinking begin to break with the traditional approach as he develops a quasi-evolutionary understanding of how the Christ revealed in scripture and patristic evidence relates to the natural world.

Gore considers the evidence of the natural world to suggest that nature has a certain amount of ordering. The world as Gore considers it has a certain amount of unity, and progresses over time.⁴⁹ Gore considers that in the

⁴⁷ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), pp. 80 - 81

⁴⁸ Gore takes a summary of the kind of Christological statement one finds at Chalcedon and applies an Alexandrian understanding, whereby the 'one person' of Chalcedon is interpreted as the person of the divine word.

⁴⁹ Gore's thinking no doubt takes influences from the academic surroundings of his day from within the scientific, historical and technological fields, mingled together with his theological concern to remain true to what he considered as Christian orthodoxy. It is with this backdrop that Gore builds an understanding of the created order that is both complex and mindful of the integrity of each discipline.

different forms of life and elements of creation there is an identifiable development from the 'inorganic to the organic and from the animal to the rational – a progressive evolution of life'.⁵⁰ Behind these we may observe a divine will and purpose relative to their scale.⁵¹ The pinnacles of these, Gore suggests, are 'reason, conscience, love, personality', and we observe these reaching an absolute 'climax in Christ'.⁵² Christ restores humanity to full relationship with God, and so to a state comparable with Eden's glory. In Christ we see the source and hope of new humanity: personhood as it was designed to be.

According to Gore, Christ is the 'supernatural' but not the unnatural;⁵³ in fact Christ is the 'crown of nature'.⁵⁴ Illingworth, Gore's compatriot, ponders that 'the divine presence which we recognise in nature will be the presence of a Spirit, which infinitely transcends the material order, yet sustains and indwells it'.⁵⁵ In like manner, Gore believes that behind nature there has always been divine 'power' present and at work in all created things.⁵⁶ He points out, however, that there is nothing to suggest that the divine attributes we see in nature are complete. Far from it; rather than the divine qualities being exhausted in nature there is 'every reason to believe nature incomplete'.⁵⁷ Come 1914, and the outbreak of the First World War, Gore's words would take on new meaning, as just how incomplete and removed from the divine

⁵⁰ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 32

⁵¹ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 32

⁵² Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 32

⁵³ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 18

⁵⁴ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 34

⁵⁵ J.R. Illingworth, *Divine Immanence: An Essay on the Spiritual Significance of Matter* (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1906), p. 72

⁵⁶ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 33

⁵⁷ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 33.

perfection creation actually was became evident to all.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, that is not to disprove Gore's or Illingworth's earlier claims, both that creation shows evidence of divine power at work in it, and that in Christ we see human perfection and creation moving on a path towards completion.⁵⁹

Even so, Gore does not claim that in Jesus' perfect humanity we see the 'suspension of nature', but instead the 'legitimate climax of natural development'.⁶⁰ As he clarifies: 'this supernatural person is no unnatural phenomenon, but is in very truth the consummation of nature's order'.⁶¹ To paraphrase Gore's thinking; creation finds itself sustained and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. This is progressive and so the Spirit indwelling creation becomes more and more capable of displaying the divine will. As this becomes increasingly recognised, it appears to us as incomplete, and for us creation begins to point to a fulfilment it does not contain. Christ is that fulfilment, where nature is fully susceptible and obedient to God's will and purpose. But, even more profoundly, this is not just the story of one human being and his intimate relationship to God, but a story impacting every human being. Christ is God and in his human nature humanity is able to touch God. Merely the touch of his cloak has the power to heal and transform lives.⁶²

⁵⁸ Gore wrote the above quote in 1891 and come 1914 humanity would have proven his words to be sadly too true with the outbreak of the First World War. The huge destruction and loss of life brought many to recognise that creation (and humanity) was still a long way from any kind of perfection.

⁵⁹ Ramsey considers that Illingworth's optimism over the progressive nature of humanity towards moral improvement became incredible following the 1st World War. Gore was not given to much optimism about the state of human nature, in any case, and any completion to his mind would surely not have been possible without the salvific interference of Christ. See Ramsey, *An Era in Anglican Theology* (2009 [1960]), p. 5

⁶⁰ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 18

⁶¹ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 229

⁶² e.g. Mark 5: 21 - 34

Gore portrays a sense of the infusing power of God. For Gore, the incarnation is about more than just showing humanity how to live, it is about drawing humanity into the life of the Spirit; Christ brings us into the divine nature. There is something about Jesus' personality and credentials that helps us to enter more readily into complete relationship with God. Such attributes are priestly. As a consequence, Christ's life and priesthood draws humanity closer to God through a life lived in the Spirit (infusing Christ's life into us by the work of the Spirit). This encourages Christ-like behaviour and obedience to God, and helps humanity to live more in tune with the indwelling Holy Spirit evident in the created order, deepening humanity's union with God.⁶³

Moving on, Gore's stance has significant consequences for his understanding of the miraculous events attributed to Christ in scripture, and these are not without significance for understanding priesthood either.

Throughout the Gospel accounts, miracles are attributed to Jesus.⁶⁴ There are so many that, irrespective of our opinion about their validity, they offer strong

⁶³ As an aside, in this section we see a little more readily Gore's ability to reconcile orthodox patristic teaching with advances in other contemporary fields of investigation, such as in the natural sciences. There are two ways we could interpret what he produces as a result. On the one hand, we might consider that what he produces departs from solid orthodoxy in order to attract and intelligibly communicate with his contemporary audience by providing a completely modern and revised interpretation of the patristic framework. On the other, we might think his ponderings are a simple development of that patristic framework in line with fresh revelations of the created order discernible through the investigations of other disciplines. Personally, I lean more towards this later interpretation and believe Gore attempts to tell an orthodox story by engaging the most developed set of intellectual and scholarly resources available to him at that time.

⁶⁴ Calming the storm – Matthew 8: 23 - 27; Mark 4: 37 - 41; Luke 8: 22 - 25; Feeding 5,000 – Matthew 14: 14 - 21; Mark 6: 30 - 44; Luke 9: 10 - 17; John 6: 1 - 14; Walking on water – Matthew 14: 22 - 32; Mark 6: 47 - 52; John 6: 16 - 21; Feeding 4,000 – Matthew 15: 32 - 39; Mark 8: 1 - 9; Fish with coin – Matthew 17: 24 - 27; Fig tree withers – Matthew 21: 18 - 22; Mark 11: 12 - 14, 20 - 25; Huge catch of fish – Luke 5: 4 - 11; John 21: 1 - 11; Water into wine – John 2: 1 - 11; Healing a man with leprosy – Matthew 8: 1 - 4; Mark 1: 40 - 44; Luke 5: 12 - 14; Roman centurion's servant – Matthew 8: 5 - 13; Luke 7: 1 - 10; Peter's mother-in-law – Matthew 8: 14 - 15; Mark 1: 30 - 31; Luke 4: 38 - 39; Two men possessed with devils – Matthew 8: 28 - 34; Mark 5: 1 - 15; Luke 8: 27 - 39; Man with palsy – Matthew 9: 2 - 7; Mark 2: 3 - 12; Luke 5: 18 - 26; Woman with bleeding – Matthew 9: 20 - 22; Mark 5: 25 - 34; Luke 8: 43 - 48; Two blind men – Matthew 9: 27 - 31; Dumb, devil-possessed man – Matthew 9:

evidence for our understanding of Christ's person and purpose as portrayed in scripture. Even to the most sceptical scholar, they offer insight into the ideas that were circulating in the communities that produced these texts about Jesus' person and purpose.

The sheer volume of space attributed to these miracle accounts in the Gospels means that they cannot be ignored in any serious investigation into the incarnation and, in like manner, any understanding of priesthood.⁶⁵ They completely colour an individual's perception of who Christ is and what he achieves.⁶⁶ It is not the purpose of this investigation to go into any great detail regarding prevailing arguments about the authenticity of these miracle accounts, only to note that Gore considers them to be entirely accurate. Gore's argument is inevitably coloured by his desire to defend orthodox Christian belief in the context of advances in various other disciplines. It is a standpoint that proves significant in influencing his entire perspective of the incarnation. Ramsey sums Gore's stance up perfectly:

32 - 33; Canaanite woman's daughter – Matthew 15: 21 - 28; Mark 7: 24 - 30; Boy with devil – Matthew 17: 14 - 21; Mark 9: 17 - 29; Luke 9: 38 - 43; Two blind men – including Bartimaeus – Matthew 20: 29 - 34; Mark 10: 46 - 52; Luke 18: 35 - 43; Demon-possessed man in synagogue – Mark 1: 21 - 28; Luke 4: 31 - 37; Blind man at Bethsaida – Mark 8: 22 - 26; Crippled woman – Luke 13: 10 - 17; Man with dropsy – Luke 14: 1 - 4; Ten men with leprosy – Luke 17: 11 - 19; The high priest's servant – Luke 22: 50 - 51; Nobleman's son at Capernaum – John 4: 46 - 54; Sick man at the pool of Bethsaida – John 5: 1 - 15; Man born blind – John 9: 1 - 41; Raising Jairus' daughter – Matthew 9: 18 - 26; Mark 5: 21 - 43; Luke 8: 40 - 56; Widow's son at Nain – Luke 7: 11 - 17 & Lazarus – John 11: 1 - 44.

⁶⁵ As Brown identifies, almost half of Mark's Gospel alone deals with miracles: Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York; Doubleday, 1997), p. 133 (footnote)

⁶⁶ For some, like Gore, the miracle accounts are to be accepted as accurate truth, some meet them with much scepticism and still others anywhere in between. As Brown makes clear; 'Many modern scholars dismiss completely the historicity of the miraculous, (whilst) others are willing to accept the healings of Jesus because they can be related to the coming of the kingdom... but completely reject the historicity of "nature" miracles'. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (1997), p. 133. For a further exploration see also Hendrik Van der Loos, *The miracles of Jesus* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), p. 3

To Chares Gore, the incarnation was inherently miraculous, and the miracles accompanying it stood attested by good historical evidence, unless blind prejudice against the miraculous gave bias to an historian's mind. Miracle was to him the vindication of freedom of the living God, intervening to restore a created world wrecked and disordered by sin.⁶⁷

To Gore's mind, miracles are God's action working upon creation. They are born out of love and compassion for a broken world. The incarnation is itself a miracle of God's making, as he intervenes to heal humanity of the sinfulness that disorders creation. To Gore, God the Creator is not subject to the laws which he himself creates in nature. In fact, Gore considers that the miracle accounts provide an essential insight into Christ's person and purpose, and as such also the example of priesthood we see exhibited through Him. The miracle accounts broaden our understanding of Christ's priesthood and its importance for the created order.

As Christ is both supernatural and the consummation of nature's order, to deny the miracles is to Gore tantamount to Arianism.⁶⁸ If Christ is indeed the 'legitimate climax of natural development' and completes the incompleteness of the natural order, no longer does it seem consistent, to Gore, to uphold arguments against Christ's miracles from the point of view that they are incompatible with nature, because what is revealed in Christ suggests to Gore quite the reverse.

⁶⁷ Ramsey, *An Era in Anglican Theology* (2009 [1960]), p. 21. See also: Douglas Dales, John Habgood, Geoffrey Rowell, Rowan Williams (eds.), *Glory Descending: A Michael Ramsey Reader* (London: Canterbury Press Norwich, 2005), p. 14

⁶⁸ To deny the divinity of Christ.

We may notice here something significant about the way Gore approaches his argument. He is not using the miracle stories as justification for Christ's divinity, but Christ's divinity as justification for the miracles. In turn, the miracles become supports for Gore's particular interpretation of what Christ's divinity means. Apparently working from Augustine's definition that a miracle is not contrary to nature, but simply what is known about nature,⁶⁹ Gore applies his interpretation of Christ as both supernatural and natural to assert proof for the 'miraculous personality' of Christ, a view also supported by Illingworth.⁷⁰ Accordingly, far from being irrational or discredited, Gore considers that miracles make perfect sense and are consistent with all the evidence at hand if one accepts Christ to be fully divine. We are then left asking what divine characteristic do we see reflected through these miraculous events?

For Gore, the miracles reveal who Christ really is: what his personhood and personality look like. Following Gore's thought: if Christ is divine and that divinity is what convinces us of the validity of the miracle accounts, then the unfolding of these miraculous events should reveal to us something of that divine personality. What we notice most obviously is that nearly all of the miracles are born, on some level, out of compassion and love: a desire to heal, mend, feed, protect, save...

What is more, Gore considers that miracles are not only apparent in and through the person of Christ, but continually taking place in the 'ordinary course of events' through the divine power present in creation. It is only

⁶⁹ Augustine, *The City of God (De Civitate Dei)*, XXI: VIII, John Healey (trans.), (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1913 [1909]), p. 302

⁷⁰ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 229; Illingworth, *Divine Immanence: An Essay on the Spiritual Significance of Matter* (1906), p. 88

because of sin that humanity has become blinded to them, because 'sin has blinded his (or her) spiritual eye'.⁷¹ A person freed from the distortion that sin has placed upon his or her spiritual vision would be able to move imminently closer to the divine goodness once again: an imminence reflected in unique bodily form in Christ. We may therefore conclude that it is Christ's priestly personality that enables humanity to glimpse the divine more fully and see the miraculous in the world around them, because Christ's priestly qualities enable humanity to gain a purer spiritual vision and show God's power working in the midst of creation, to heal it and give it new life.

Whilst we may or may not be convinced by Gore's arguments asserting the validity of the miracle accounts, we must now ponder where this leaves Gore's understanding of the person of Christ, if we are also to discover more about his thoughts on priesthood. For instance, we must ask whether such qualities would render Christ less than human on account of his ability to transcend what we may consider as being normal human experience. After all, normal human beings are not often credited with having the gift of performing miracles!

Gore considers that the evidence of Christ's ability to perform miracles does not equate to a limiting of his human credentials. Miracles are an expression of Christ being more fully natural – the crown or completion of nature. For Gore, Christ is able to perform miracles precisely because in Him humanity is perfected – ultimately natural. He is so in touch with the divine creative spirit evident in nature that it is able to work through him. This involves a

⁷¹ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 45

transcending of the constraints that we experience in our present relationship with creation, constraints resulting from our own sinfulness and distancing from God. Therefore, one is left pondering: is this the kind of human nature evident in Adam before the fall?

In answer, Gore does consider Christ to be the second Adam, returning humanity to its pre-fallen state in order to advance it towards an evolutionary completion. To Gore's mind, such a completion requires humanity to rediscover elements of its pre-fallen personality. Gore is not suggesting that human evolution will eventually produce superpowers, but that the progressive fulfilment of human nature, seen most fully in Christ, is at the same time a growing into union with God who is nature's Lord. And so, in Christ we see miracles not as actions of his human nature alone, but of human nature in perfect union with the divine.

Prior to the Fall we see humanity basking in the radiance of good relationship with God. There is something about humanity's pre-fallen personality that enables Adam to relate to God in a way that is just not possible following his disobedience and humanity's resulting fall from grace. According to Gore, in Christ we see a return to that pre-fallen personality as he exhibits the traits necessary to live in full relationship with God. In Christ, the image of God implanted at creation is perfected. But it is Christ's priestly credentials that enable us to live life in the Spirit, changing us to be like him, transforming our knowledge and action, and nurturing the image of God more fully within us, and so helping us grow towards a healthier relationship with God.

So far in the second section of this chapter, we have seen how Gore takes a relatively orthodox stance when it comes to biblical and creedal interpretation, seeing in them a consistent testimony to the person of Christ. Gore also considers that Christ's person, as depicted in those texts, is completely compatible with our understanding of evolution. He believes Christ to be the 'legitimate climax of natural development',⁷² both supernatural and fully natural. God is not subject to the laws of nature which he creates. Because of this, Christ exhibits miraculous qualities, but these do not render him less than human. In Christ we see humanity perfected and we glimpse what a life lived in full union with God would look like. It is these credentials that qualifies Christ's priestliness to enable humanity to encounter God in a unique way.

We have also discovered how a significant attribute of the priestly nature that we see in Christ advances humanity towards perfect union with God. It does this by helping each individual recognise God's action infusing Christ's life into them by the work of the Spirit and encouraging them to draw others into the same awareness. For Gore, Christ helps humanity live more in tune with the indwelling Holy Spirit evident in the created order. Christ's priestly personality grounded in love and compassion enables creation to enter into the divine life more fully. Living in that love, humanity is more readily able see the miraculous in the world around it by developing a purer spiritual vision. Therefore, priesthood, as it is witnessed in Christ, is associated with helping each human being live most authentically according to the image that God has implanted in them, thereby helping them grow into a healthier relationship with God.

⁷² Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 18

Given that Gore believes that Christ's priesthood offers the means to restore the previously broken relationship, what are his thoughts on Christ and whether or not he sinned? And does it have any bearing on our understanding of the nature of Christ's priesthood?

d) Did Christ sin?

As we discovered earlier, it is Gore's belief that humanity is created to be in relationship with God, to be embraced by his divine goodness. Humanity's sinfulness, however, has separated it from that divine goodness. Theologians as recent as O'Collins have pondered the question of whether Christ sinned.⁷³ For Gore, as with O'Collins, the evidence for such a claim is unconvincing. Indeed, Gore would claim that the patristic evidence would strongly oppose such an argument.⁷⁴ Gore, employing a line of reasoning strongly paralleling that of Gregory of Nyssa, states; 'in the first place humanity in Him is sinless... (all the evidence suggests that) in every form temptation was rejected'.⁷⁵

O'Collins argues that, 'sin is to be attributed to the person and is a personal offence against God'.⁷⁶ To sin is to act in a way that hurts God and so causes a breakdown in relationship with him. From this perspective, sin is a distancing from God, a damaging of relationship between humanity and God. Gore seems to adhere to this interpretation and claims that in Christ both divinity and humanity find no separation and are fully and completely united. In Christ

⁷³ Gerald O'Collins, 'The Critical Issues'. In *The Incarnation*, S. Davis, D. Kendall, G. O'Collins (eds.) (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 14 - 15

⁷⁴ Gregory explores this in: Gregory of Nyssa, '*An Address on Religious Instruction*', XVI. In *Christology of the Later Fathers*, Edward Rochie Hardy & Cyril C. Richardson (eds.), (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1954), p. 292

⁷⁵ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), pp.165-166; see also, Gregory of Nyssa, *An Address on Religious Instruction*, 16 & 28

⁷⁶ O'Collins, 'The Critical Issues'. In *The Incarnation*, Davis et al. (eds.), (2002), p. 15

we see humanity and divinity in perfect relation; each inseparably seen in their fullest expression. Therefore, to Gore, it makes no sense to infer that Christ could betray his essence by embracing sin, because to do so would, to Gore's mind, mean deceiving his own divine characteristics. So, continuing to follow this line of thought, Gore considers it preposterous to suggest that Christ sinned. Christ, he claims, is sinless precisely because sin is not natural. Christ's sinlessness is not a mark of him being unnatural, but a mark of him being completely and more fully natural than those corrupted by sin.

By association, Gore reveals something significant about the human condition that may have significant consequences for our understanding of priesthood. According to Gore, Christ exhibits no conflict in his personhood, and that personhood is both fully divine and fully human. If, then, his divine attributes prohibit him from sinning and this does not limit his humanity, it follows that a sinful nature is not a natural part of the complete human form. Sin, then, is not natural to the human condition. Thus, sinless humanity is the more natural and desirable state. This is a state we see exhibited most perfectly in Christ. Christ's priestly credentials stand as a blueprint for ministerial orders in the Church, in which encouraging the resistance of evil and the repentance of wrongdoing are important facets in order to inspire humanity to enter more readily into deepening relationship with God.

At this point, Gore returns to a more traditional exposition of Christology and his distinctive quasi-evolutionary Christological approach drops to the background. He remains steadfast in his conviction about the amount of evidence justifying Christ's truly human nature. Christ lived a fully human life,

was born, taught, was tempted and died. Everything about His life suggests that he lived a 'really human existence'.⁷⁷

Even his own consciousness of his full unity with the Father does not, in Gore's understanding, limit this human experience.⁷⁸ He ponders: 'there was present to him the consciousness of his unique Sonship,⁷⁹ but that consciousness did not interfere with his properly human growth'.⁸⁰ We see the divine Sonship asserted to him at the River Jordan⁸¹ and during his ministerial life, but his full understanding of his divine inheritance does not limit his development as a human, in any regard. Even at the point of death, the pain of human suffering is not held from him and he enters into the plea of every suffering human heart, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me'.⁸²

And so, what is it, if he is so perfectly human, that sets Christ apart as the supreme archetype? For Gore, it is a combination of his ability to resist all temptation, his life of constant prayer⁸³ and the way he exhibits perfect human and yet fully divine qualities and so offers fallen humanity a route back to the Father. He says, 'In the person of the Incarnate we see how true it has been all along that man is in God's image: for this is man, Jesus of Nazareth; his

⁷⁷ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 150. Seemingly adding weight to Gore's claims, Westcott states that, 'the absolute union of human nature, in its fullest form maturing with the divine in the one person of our Creator and Redeemer, was wrought out in the very school of life in which we are trained': Brooke Foss Westcott, *Christus Consummator: Some Aspects of the Work and Person of Christ in Relation to Modern thought* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1890), p. 26

⁷⁸ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 150

⁷⁹ Luke 2: 49

⁸⁰ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 145

⁸¹ Mt. 3: 17

⁸² Mt. 26: 39

⁸³ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 148

qualities are human qualities, love and justice, self-sacrifice and desire and compassion; yet they are the qualities of none other than the very God'.⁸⁴

There is no compromise or condition upon God becoming man, since from the very beginning man was made in God's image. This has left God free at the opportune time to express himself as man and yet not limit his own revelation of himself.⁸⁵ The traits we see in Christ are the traits we see in the Father and the Spirit, and as is appropriate they are in perfect relation to one another as they portray the 'ultimate' reality. In Christ we do not see the limited character of a creature but of 'God himself'.⁸⁶ And so, as Athanasius points out, Christ 'sanctified the body by being in it', and all creation along with it.⁸⁷ In his humanity, Christ realigns the broken human condition so that it may fulfil its potential and offers the same to all those in communion with him. What is more, in Christ's personhood we see God in human form: in Christ we see the unveiling of God.⁸⁸ And what is the marked quality we see in this unveiling? According to Gore, 'we are taught by the incarnation that the quality of the divine personality is love...the world apart from Christ gives us no adequate assurance that God is love,'⁸⁹ and so 'God cannot come any closer to man, man cannot come any nearer to God, than is effected in Him.'⁹⁰

All of this has deep and long-running consequences for our understanding of Christ, because, as Gore continues; 'the relation which love holds to justice or

⁸⁴ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), pp. 116 - 117; See also Gregory of Nyssa, *An Address on Religious Instruction*, XX. In *Christology of the Later Fathers* (1954), p. 296

⁸⁵ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 116

⁸⁶ See Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 114

⁸⁷ Athanasius, *On The Incarnation*, 3: 17 & 18 (2011 [1981]), pp. 31 - 32

⁸⁸ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 114

⁸⁹ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 119

⁹⁰ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 6

to any other quality in him, is the relation which it holds in the ultimate reality; his aims are God's aims; his will God's will; his victory God's victory'.⁹¹ Christ is the essence of priestly life, in which prayer, resisting temptation to sin and nurturing a deep relationship with God are all key. The qualities of love, service, truth, justice, self-sacrifice and compassion all feature prominently.

These are all attributes that we see expressed most fully in the events surrounding Christ's death and resurrection. In order to move our understanding on, we will now explore how Gore considers that these two defining events influence our understanding of Christ's salvific nature and priestly existence.

e) The Resurrection and Ascension; Drawing us back into Relationship with God

According to what we have just explored, Gore believes that sinless humanity is the more natural and desirable state. This is a state we see exhibited in Christ. In him we see the most authentic personality of God.⁹² Gore informs us of how, in Christ, God 'has shown that he is alive; in human nature he has given glimpses of his mind and character'.⁹³ Through Christ, we see that God is unqualified love; extreme love; ultimate love. He is the consummation of the Old Testament prophecies partly because in him, this love is intertwined with his faithfulness, justice, compassion and truth, all divine traits recognisable throughout the Hebrew Scriptures.⁹⁴ Thus, through these traits we are also

⁹¹ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), pp. 114 - 115

⁹² Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 35

⁹³ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 33

⁹⁴ See Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 121

struck by how alike we can be to Him; and yet because of sin, how different we remain.

Gore considers Christ's priestly credentials important in order for humanity to enter more readily into relationship with God. In the incarnation, we see both revelation and reconciling action. Sinless nature being the more desirable state, and following Christ's priestly example, resisting evil and repentance for any wrong doing are attributes that the Church and its ministerial orders are to promote so that humanity may aspire towards a higher spiritual state, ultimately communion with God. Christ is the essence of the priestly life.

According to Gore, it is the paradoxical mix of his humiliating death with his love and faithfulness that provide the backdrop for his victory and our redemption. Through them he is able to consume our inability to reach the mark. As Gore continues; through his self-sacrificial death 'he took upon himself all that tells against divine love, all that has ever wrung from men's hearts the bitter words of unbelief, or the more chastened cry of agonizing enquiry'⁹⁵ For Gore, Christ does this in three ways. First, he reveals the truth about God. Second, he re-establishes the conditions for relationship and enables that relationship to flourish. Third, by living a fully human life and dying an agonizing human death, and by facing all the temptations, humiliation and fear that terrorises the human condition, but doing so with dignity, acceptance and uncorrupted moral character, Christ opens the possibility for every person to relate to him and find assurance in him. And so, in Christ God draws near. Thornton develops this thinking some years later by saying, 'the probation and

⁹⁵ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 120

the ordeal of his voluntary self-oblation were the divine answer to the sin of the world.’⁹⁶

For Gore, the world, having been torn apart by the ravages of sin, required Christ not just to perfect all that had gone before, but also to redeem lost humanity. To steal a phrase from Ramsey; ‘hence Christus Consummator must needs also be Christus Redemptor...’⁹⁷ Before this could be realised, however, there had to be his agonising and humiliating death. The cross banishes all that stands in God’s way. As Thornton further identifies, ‘this humiliation was only temporary; for he whom we thus contemplate has now been crowned with glory and honour...that which belonged to the plan of creation has now been won; but only because Jesus suffered and died’.⁹⁸ For Gore, it was the faithfulness, the humility, the love at the point of death that brought about the spoils. And so the bitter taste of death and failure is transformed into the voluptuous banquet of resurrection, and with it fresh hope for humanity once lost.

St Gregory of Nyssa has something significant to offer here. Gregory outlines how God’s victorious act through the paschal mystery is revealed in the gospel’s realignment of our understanding of power. He says, ‘let us penetrate the successive events of the gospel story, in which the union of power with love for man is displayed... That the omnipotent nature was capable of descending to man’s lowly position is clearer evidence of power than

⁹⁶ The notable mid-twentieth century theologian, L.S. Thornton stands in the tradition of Gore and as his disciple develops some of Gores earlier thinking. L.S. Thornton, *The Common Life in the Body of Christ* (London: Dacre Press, 1950 [1942]), p. 425

⁹⁷ Ramsey, *An Era in Anglican Theology* (2009 [1960]), p. 17

⁹⁸ Thornton, *The Common Life in the Body of Christ* (1950 [1942]), p. 378

supernatural miracles.⁹⁹ It is in this realignment of power that we see true kingdom values breaking through. Their presence on earth brings humanity closer to the heavenly realm and God's divine purpose. For Gore, all of this is captured in one significant phrase, 'God is love!'¹⁰⁰

This realignment of power is significant for Gore because, 'Jesus as an essential Son of the Father reveals no other love than God's, and by His resurrection from the dead manifests that love triumphant through all seeming failure'.¹⁰¹ Consequently, the glory of God is brought to bear through the vulnerability, meekness and submissiveness of Christ combined with His divine authority.

For Gore, the tragedy of the Cross is central to salvation as indeed is the power of the Resurrection. The two are completely necessary and inseparable in his understanding of atonement. Gore often infuses his thoughts on the subject of atonement into his wider deliberations. This adds a level of complexity to our task, as any atonement theory evident in his writings are inextricably bound up with other aspects of his theology. All the same, from what he does reveal of his thinking on atonement, he appears to draw on a number of Christian soteriological typologies. In Myers' opinion, Christian thought on atonement can be broken down into a number of significant typologies: Christ the second Adam, Christ the sacrifice, Christ the teacher, Christ the brother, Christ the law-giver and Christ the healer.¹⁰² At different stages of his writing, Gore uses

⁹⁹ Gregory of Nyssa, *An Address on Religious Instruction*, 24. In *Christology of the Later Fathers* (1954), pp. 301 - 302

¹⁰⁰ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 120

¹⁰¹ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 121

¹⁰² For a perceptive overview of typologies of Christian atonement see: Benjamin Myers, (14/9/2013) *How does Jesus save? An alternative typology (against Gustaf Aulén)*. Available

terminology that one could associate with many of these classifications. We get an insight into Gore's thoughts on atonement on an occasion when he discusses the issue directly:

Is there not an immense difference between the effect upon men's minds of a mere announcement of free forgiveness and the effect upon them of a covenant of free forgiveness brought at so tremendous a price as the death of the Son of God? The reason for the fearful price paid to win forgiveness seems to be found rightly by St Paul in the necessity for guarding the revelation of the divine mercy from all associations of easy going indulgence or indifference to sin. It was guarded by the Sacrifice; and it was God himself who paid the price.¹⁰³

Gore seems to suggest that Christ's death was necessary in order to reveal to humanity how precious the gift of relationship to God truly is. In such a way, the incarnation brings all peoples into 'the light of Christ', where they will be judged by their relationship to him'.¹⁰⁴ And so Christ establishes himself as 'the second Adam' bringing all people 'age by age into relation to himself' until he may 'come again... as the acknowledged centre and head of humanity and the universe'.¹⁰⁵

As we touched upon earlier, Gore considers the incarnation to be about enabling life to be lived in the Spirit; a rebuilding of relationship by God's own miraculous intervention in the person of his Son. This includes teaching and revelation, but more than that it is an infusing of Christ's life into us by the work

at: <http://www.faith-theology.com/2013/09/how-does-jesus-save-alternative.html>, accessed 11th November 2013.

¹⁰³ Gore, *The Reconstruction of Belief* (1926), p. 599

¹⁰⁴ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 6

¹⁰⁵ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 6

of the Spirit, which in turn transforms our knowledge and action. In these we see Christ's priestly identity at work.¹⁰⁶ Gore clearly sees the high price of Christ's death as necessary for humanity's free forgiveness, by revealing to humanity the true value of good relationship to God. He offers an amnesty for previous destructive behaviour. It is through this forgiveness that the relationship begins its restoration¹⁰⁷ and through revelation that this forgiveness is unveiled for humanity to grasp, but it is a forgiveness brought at a great price.¹⁰⁸ Christ's sacrifice necessarily secures freedom from sin and wrenches such freedom away from evil intent, sanctifying the human condition as it goes. This divine action transforms us from within. In so doing, Christ provides the means by which the true self-sacrificial and loving personality of God is revealed, the conditions of relationship laid down and the prospect of deepening relationship between God and humanity is restored.

Gore understands Christ to be the embodiment of uncorrupted humanity, whilst also portraying the very attributes of God. Through the nature of his death Christ absorbs death into the divine life. He subsequently removes the power of the fear of death through the resurrection, because only by rising again does Christ truly conquer the power that death has to drive fear into human hearts.¹⁰⁹ Gore sums all of this up perfectly in the opening paragraphs of his Bampton lectures:

Christianity is faith in a certain person Jesus Christ, and by faith in Him is meant such unreserved self-committal as is only possible, because faith in

¹⁰⁶ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 36 & Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 6

¹⁰⁷ This links directly into the chapter on Sacraments

¹⁰⁸ Gore, *The Reconstruction of Belief* (1926), p. 599

¹⁰⁹ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 15

Jesus is understood to be faith in God and union with Jesus union with God. True Christianity is thus a personal relationship – the conscious deliberate adhesion of men (and women) to know their weakness, their sin, their fallibility, to a redeemer whom they know to be supreme, sinless, infallible.¹¹⁰

We may note in this passage how Gore places faith and union side by side as significant factors. Whilst Gore may well see faith as being concerned with revelation, knowledge and action, his use of union here reveals his understanding that something much deeper is at work within each believer. And so, to Gore, Christ is healer, teacher, sacrifice, restorer, redeemptor, sanctifier, exemplar and much more besides.

But how is this to effect the individual? Gore's answer is simple, but not necessarily easy. To Gore, a response required; every person needs to want to take the actions necessary to restore the relationship. Right action and intent from the individual are important if the benefits of Christ's sacrifice are to be fully received. The individual needs to move towards God as God moves closer to them. Gore is consistent here with his fellow *Lux Mundi* contributor, Lyttelton. Lyttelton claims, 'The isolation of the truth about the atonement from other parts of Christian doctrine has led to a mode of stating it which deprives us of all the motive to action, of all responsibility for our own salvation... this error springs from ignoring his (Christ's) perfect humanity'.¹¹¹

This is essential to our understanding of what Gore has to offer our notion of priesthood. He considers that the nature of true Christian priesthood is to

¹¹⁰ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 1

¹¹¹ Arthur Lyttelton, 'The Atonement'. In *Lux Mundi: A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation*, Charles Gore (ed.), (1890 [1889]), p. 307

reveal, lead and realign humanity towards the redemptive rewards won by Christ through his sacrifice on the cross and his glorious resurrection. How does Gore consider that ministerial orders can do this most effectively? Simply by drawing their priesthood from Christ and promoting those attributes of behaviour, teaching and personality discernible through his priestly existence.

The author of the Hebrews tells us that 'when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God'.¹¹² Westcott considers that this singular passage 'marks a unique dignity of the ascended Christ. Priests stand in their ministry, angels stand or fall prostrate before the Divine Majesty; but the Son shares the Father's throne. As priest, as intercessor, he reigns still, reigns in his glorious manhood',¹¹³ so that 'every word of Christ is seen to be a sacrifice and a victory'.¹¹⁴ Like Westcott, Gore is convinced that, by standing as the completion of the sacrificial mosaic priesthood and after the order of Melchizedek, Christ's supreme example laid down in his self-sacrificial life and death and certified through his resurrection and ascension leaves an authoritative moral system, not of prescriptive rules necessarily, but certainly for the formation of Christian character. As formation develops so the individual is more open to the Spirit working within. Christ's priesthood, then, is the supreme priesthood, the perfect example; the par excellence to which all those called into ordained ministry in the Church must aspire. Christ sets the context for all subsequent priestly work in the Church.

¹¹² Hebrews 10: 12

¹¹³ Westcott, *Christus Consummator* (1890), p. 43

¹¹⁴ Westcott, *Christus Consummator* (1890), p. 26

As we explored earlier, the incarnate Christ provides Gore with a model for how humanity is designed to be.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, he recognises in Christ both the prophetic and transformative being equally at work, without separation. Christ is 'Prophet, Priest and King'.¹¹⁶ As prophet he reveals the divine life. As priest he realigns humanity's disordered desire. As king he leads humanity towards free forgiveness, redemption and, ultimately, eternal life. Christ provides access to redemption and in his exemplary high priesthood sits ascended in glory. This eternally present reality leaves, for Gore, moral obligation on behalf of humanity to respond, if it is to be drawn by the Spirit into the eternal life Christ offers. He says, 'let anyone who would be a sincere disciple contemplate steadily the moral character expressed in the words of Jesus Christ and exhibited in His actions... he needs must also be filled with a great dread, on account of the tremendous standard which is there before him'.¹¹⁷

Here, the Church and its ecclesiastical offices have a leading part to play. Because Christ leaves such a clear moral imperative and sets the example, the Church has an obligation to strive to make the ideal a reality and reveal the works of God through the incarnate and ascended Christ afresh to each new generation. As individuals are transformed by the life of Christ growing within them, through by the work of the Spirit, so they become better acquainted with the person and nature of Christ and more aware of God's power. Gore states, 'As Son of man he shows us what human nature should be, individually and socially, and supplies us with the motives and the means

¹¹⁵ See section ii above.

¹¹⁶ Charles Gore, *The Mission of the Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892), p.3

¹¹⁷ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 34

for making the ideal real'.¹¹⁸ The motive, then, is our salvation and the means, the Church and its ministerial orders.

Gore considers that Christ is not just a supreme example, not just a figure in history, but is alive through the resurrection and reigning eternally in heaven. His humanity places him in the closest possible relation to us and through it he has experience and understanding of our innermost being and personality. Because of his divinity, Christ knows of what we are made in a mystical and not just metaphysical sense. By sending his Spirit he is alive in our hearts and the timeless example of the Gospels. The forces for good we see in him are also present in us through his Spirit. It is this Spirit that indwells his Church: its traditions, its ministerial orders and each believer. But what further part does the Church and its ministerial orders have to play, according to Gore's understanding?

f) The Church an Extension of the Incarnation

In the last section, we explored how, for Gore, the tragedy of the Cross is central to salvation as indeed is the power of the resurrection. He believes that Christ's death was necessary in order to reveal to humanity the importance of relationship to God. Christ's sacrifice secures freedom from sin, sanctifying the human condition as it goes. In so doing, Christ provides the means by which the true loving personality of God is revealed, the conditions for renewed relationship are laid down and the prospect of deepening relationship with God restored.

¹¹⁸ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 171

Gore believes Christ to be the embodiment of uncorrupted humanity, whilst portraying the very attributes of God. Through the nature of his death, Christ absorbs death into the divine life and removes the power of the fear of death by his resurrection.

From this position, Gore considers that the nature of Christian priesthood is to reveal, lead and realign humanity towards the redemptive rewards won by Christ through the cross and resurrection. The Church's ministerial orders look to draw their priesthood from Christ's, promoting those attributes of behaviour, teaching and personality discernible through his priestly existence.

For Gore, the Church is consequently an 'extension of the incarnation': it continues what Christ began by revealing God's works of salvation to each new age.¹¹⁹ The Church strives to unveil the glory of the Incarnate Lord so that those ignorant of the salvation won through Christ may enter into relationship with him and so that the faithful may move deeper into the sacrificial offering of the paschal mystery: Christ's self-giving act of salvation completed through the cross, resurrection and ascension. This is because, to Gore, Christ is always the exemplar of any ministry undertaken in his name: he is the great high priest.¹²⁰ Ministerial orders of the Church are called under his authority and must be ever mindful of the protocol he lays down. Whilst they can never fully replicate him, they are nonetheless called to extol such values as are essential to any good functioning of the priesthood in Christ's name. They are called to make him known in the world, so that through him every human may come to know God more completely and recognise Christ's life being worked

¹¹⁹ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 219

¹²⁰ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 68

within them by the Spirit. Christ is 'Prophet, Priest and King'.¹²¹ He is the great high priest. Authentic priestly values are, then, only to be found in the example laid down by Christ, and through them humanity is infused by the Spirit and may gain fleeting glimpses of God's heavenly values breaking through.

In previous sections in this chapter, we discovered what Gore considered some of the main attributes of Christ's priestly example looked like. As a consequence, these are, for Gore, also characteristic elements of the Church's ministerial orders if that ministry is to have authenticity and follow Christ's supreme model of priesthood. It is worth reminding ourselves of what these are before moving on. For Gore, the priesthood must:

- Point towards/reveal the highest moral good that is God
- Make God more fully known by revealing the divine personality - love
- Encourage humanity to live in that love so that their spiritual vision might be enlightened
- Enable humanity to live more in tune with the indwelling Holy Spirit at work within them and evident in the created order
- Help each human being live more authentically according to the image that God has implanted in them at creation, helping them grow into a healthier relationship with him
- Help humanity to recognise that sinlessness is the more natural human state, enabling humanity to deepen union with God by:
 - Resisting evil and temptation
 - Repentance of previous wrongdoing

¹²¹ Gore, *The Mission of the Church* (1892), p. 3

- Increased prayerfulness
- Call humanity to repentance - revealing how previous divisions caused by disobedience to God (sin) may be reconciled
- Reveal the means for reconciliation – healing the broken relationship
- Offer an example based on moral integrity: love, compassion, service and self-sacrifice
- Looking to Christ as prophet, priest and king,¹²² the Church and its ministerial orders are to reveal, realign and lead humanity's disordered desire towards the redemptive rewards of free forgiveness and eternal life won by Christ

In Gore's understanding, these elements can only be aspired to in the Church and its ministerial orders by studying, contemplating and promoting Christ's attributes of behaviour, teaching and personality – most notably love, compassion, forgiveness and prayerfulness. The ministerial priesthood is called to act as an aid in revealing the divine goodness drawing near and an instrument for the restoration of relationship to God. Such divine goodness is never more evident than in the incarnation. For Gore, this is where the Church, its ministry and its mission must always be grounded, because as he declares, 'it is a satisfactory consideration that the Church is naturally of a piece with the incarnation, the fruits of which it perpetuates... and has finality which belongs to its very essence'.¹²³

As Christ is the second volume of the divine revelation, Gore sees the Church and its ministerial orders as forming the bridge between Christ's incarnation

¹²² Gore, *The Mission of the Church* (1892), p. 3

¹²³ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 54

and the final chapter when all things will be gathered to the divine goodness through Christ. In evaluating this line of thought, Cox rightly concludes that; 'the life of the church, then, becomes a necessary implication of incarnational dogma.'¹²⁴ Gore sees the Church as the 'Body of Christ'... 'the extension and perpetuation of the incarnation in the world',¹²⁵ because it embodies the principles of Christ and infuses and enfolds the lives of its members with his life.

It is this 'life' that makes the Church Christ's continuing body in the temporal world by way of his Spirit. For as Gore expounds; 'if our Lord is our example and sacrifice, he is also, by the infusion of his Spirit, our present inward life, "the life of life": that if the Church exists to uphold a moral standard, she exists also as a body ensolved by a Spirit who makes that standard practicable.'¹²⁶ It is this inward Spirit that provides each believer with every right moral action and thought. And so Gore concludes, 'in light of this principle one can see why it is that our sins may be forgiven us 'in the name of Jesus'; why the sacrament of our incorporation into Christ is also the sacrament of plenary absolution and we can confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.'¹²⁷ As Cox so eloquently puts it;

Gore claimed that the Church intentionally reflected the incarnation. Jesus' calling of disciples, bestowing of rites and claiming to be the Messiah of a new kingdom all indicated to Gore a clear dominical design. Never coexistent with

¹²⁴ Cox, *Priesthood in a New Millennium* (2004), p. 28

¹²⁵ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 219

¹²⁶ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), pp. 220 - 221

¹²⁷ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), pp. 224 - 225

the kingdom of God, the Church nevertheless represents the kingdom on earth as a visible society, which is the body of Christ.¹²⁸

The ordained ministries of the Church today find themselves planted into this worldly 'visible society' but must remain focused upon the heavenly realm. The kingdom has not yet come, but the Church's ministerial orders should desire to move earth ever closer to heaven. They stand mindful of their immense calling to help teach, nurture and reveal to a people too often inclined to want to remain in the decay of the worldly, a new life infused with Christ's life and transformed by the Spirit, a heavenly kingdom breaking into this temporal realm: a kingdom disclosed most exceptionally in the incarnate Christ.

g) *Concluding Thoughts*

For Gore, the incarnation was primarily about humanity's individual and corporate transformation through a process of example, revelation and invocation of the Spirit. The incarnation was the entering into the world of a first step towards the formation of a society of transformed people, the Church, called to live as salt and light in the world. This society is called to make visible the blessings of Christ, partly in doctrines and local rituals, but most especially in the sharing of spiritual realities and experiences through unity and communion. The incarnation, to Gore, is about drawing people into belonging to a body of transformed people, which the Spirit infuses and invigorates, drawing them deeper into the life of Christ who leads them towards the eternal source of goodness in God the Father.

¹²⁸ Cox, *Priesthood in a New Millennium* (2004), p. 28

Chapter 2: The Evidence of History

a) Introduction

Charles Gore believes that the Church's formation and development was intentional on the part of Jesus, and is the next stage of his masterplan for unveiling the love of God upon the world following his incarnation.¹²⁹ He deems the books of the New Testament,¹³⁰ the writings of the apostolic and sub-apostolic eras, and the wider historical picture, to provide irrefutable evidence for this.¹³¹ Gore also considers the ordained ministry within the structuring of the Church (consisting of bishops, priests and deacons) to be divinely

¹²⁹ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 1

¹³⁰ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), pp. 30 - 31

¹³¹ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), pp. 11 - 25, 101 - 103, 181 - 194 etc. It should be noted that Gore takes certain pre-requisites regarding scriptural authority for granted, especially in regards to the authorship and date attributed to certain New Testament texts. In his introduction to *the Church and the Ministry* Gore is open handed in his recognition of this and he offers an explanation for doing so. Gore acknowledges that there is an ongoing debate at the time of his writing regarding the authorship and date attributed to the letters of St Peter, St James, Ephesians, Timothy and Titus.¹³¹ He also acknowledges an ongoing debate regarding the historical accuracy of the Gospel accounts and the Acts of the Apostles. Gore is open to the academic discussion regarding these texts and considers the varying theories put forward to be enriching for open scholarship, but he remains unconvinced that these theories subsequently cast doubt on the overall validity of these texts. Following a short justification as to why he feels these documents contain enough validity for the purpose of discussing the Church and its ordained ministry, he concludes by affirming to his readers that 'it is then from no fear of free criticism that the authenticity and trustworthiness of these New Testament documents is here on assumed'. Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 5

Even though this dissertation is being written in the second decade of the twenty-first century, we may observe that many of these same questions regarding authorship and dating of New Testament texts are yet to be satisfactorily answered and, depending upon one's perspective, remain to a greater or lesser extent open to debate. As the author of this dissertation, I naturally have certain inclinations regarding these debates. Some theories concerning authorship seem more plausible to me than others, but it is not the focus of this project to go into any real depth investigating and casting opinion on these as-yet inconclusive areas of scholarship. Whilst we may touch upon them, more broadly, I believe it will be enough to follow Gore's stance in this instance and affirm such ongoing debates as enriching and constructive to wider academic understanding, and given their inconclusive nature, will also follow a belief that taken as a whole they contain enough trustworthiness and authenticity to regard what they include as valid to be used in this investigation into Gore's understanding of the primitive church's progress, conduct and ordering.

instituted, and believes that the evidence of history helps to substantiate his stance.

During the course of this chapter, we will look to draw out the significant points of Gore's argument and use supporting evidence to explain his position. It would, however, require an entire thesis in itself to look in depth at all the evidence that Gore provides to justify his conclusions regarding the ministerial ordering of the Church and associated areas. Therefore, this chapter will aspire to being appropriately selective in its investigations. First, it will look to uncover how Gore considers the Church to find its focus for structural and spiritual unity in the teachings and oversight of the apostles. Then it will unearth how Gore interprets evidence from the apostolic and sub-apostolic eras as pointing, with remarkable clarity and consistency, to the early church settling into an ordering of ministry which consists of three independent orders of bishops, priests and deacons, with the authority given to the first apostles being passed down through successive generations of bishops via apostolic succession.

In order to explore this adequately, we will need to examine Gore's historical justification for his belief in the validity of the ministerial ordering of the Church, and look at the evidence Gore provides for the existence of the Church and the forms it takes. It will not be our purpose to provide an assessment of Gore's claims in the light of contemporary historical scholarship and the evidence it has amassed, but simply to understand the nature of Gore's claims, and the ways in which he read and deployed the evidence. First, in the sub-section entitled 'The Foundation of the Church', we will uncover how Gore believes Christ intended the Church to be structured to ensure continuity and

authenticity in its teaching and function as it developed following his ascension. Then, in the sub-section entitled 'Common Unity of the Church', we will discuss Gore's justification for his claim that the Church's unity is to be found through continuity with the teaching and oversight of the apostles, amidst rich local diversity. Finally, in the sub-section entitled 'The Threefold Ministry and Apostolic Succession', we will explore how Gore considers the ministerial ordering of the Church to be a constitutive factor of this teaching and oversight. We will also observe how this develops into the threefold ordering of bishops, priests and deacons so familiar with us today, and how Gore considers the Church down the ages to maintain its authenticity through a line of succession of first apostles and then bishops, continuing down to the church of today.

So then, let us begin by pondering the first of these matters, the foundation of the Church.

b) The Foundation of the Church

To begin his investigation, Gore considers there to be one glaring question that needs considering concerning the authenticity of the Church and its structures. We find his answer to this concern providing the bedrock for his entire thinking around the Church and its ministerial orders. The question may be put this way: did Christ intend his legacy to be entwined with the ministerial formation of the Church, or was his intention for a more free-flowing dissemination of his truth through more versatile means? Or as Gore puts it:

The question is whether believers were left to organise themselves in societies by the natural attraction of sympathy in beliefs and aims, and are, therefore,

still at liberty to organise themselves on any model which seems from time to time to promise the best results, or whether the Divine Founder of the Christian religion Himself instituted a society, a brotherhood, to be the home of the grace and truth which he came to bring to men: so that becoming his disciple, meant from the first this – in a real sense this only – incorporation into a society.¹³²

For Gore, the answer has far reaching consequences for the way we view the Church. If the body of believers are simply a locally organised group who are free to adapt according to whichever sympathies are prevalent at a given time, then the nature of the society to which they are members is in many ways of human origin – primarily organised according to human discretion and influence. This would mean that structures, teaching and ordering would all be open to change according to the prevailing fashion or sympathies of a given era or location.

If, on the other hand, there is an origin of divine direction behind the Church and the way it is ordered then it follows that the Church is not something created by humans in response to their reflections upon God's action in the world, but it *is* God's action in the world. As Gore clarifies: 'If this was the case, the Church was not created by men, nor can it be recreated from time to time in view of varying circumstances. It comes upon men from above. It makes the claim of a divine institution. It has the authority of Christ'.¹³³ According to this view, the Church is an extension of the Incarnation, the next stage of the divine

¹³² Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 9

¹³³ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 9

masterplan and, through the Spirit, the life it breathes is the very life of Christ himself.¹³⁴

This conclusion is in glaring opposition to his fellow bishop, Lightfoot, who concludes that the Church and its ministry is more heavily influenced by human origin and social need than divine direction.¹³⁵ This is a stance that Gore simply cannot accept and he is in good company, most notably in line with the Anglican Divine, Richard Hooker. In Book 5, Chapter 77 of his 'Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity', Hooker describes the ordained ministry as 'ministers of God as from whom their authority is derived and not from men'.¹³⁶ Lightfoot's conclusions attribute the Church's development to a historical process of human influence, whereas Gore (and Hooker) insist upon a far greater acknowledgement of divine inventiveness and involvement.

Gore acknowledges the attraction of concluding that Christ intended a more fluid process through which his truth could be disseminated across the world, without the need for a united society of believers structured under a system of ministerial ordering, but considers such a conclusion to be at odds with the wider evidence provided by the New Testament and early church tradition. Gore interprets that evidence in outline as follows:

1. Christ chose to work in and through a small band of followers, who come to be known as the Apostles.

¹³⁴ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 219

¹³⁵ Joseph Barber Lightfoot, *The Christian Ministry* (New York: Macmillam & Co: 1901)

¹³⁶ Richard Hooker, *The Works of Mr Richard Hooker; with General Index: also Mr Isaac Walton's Life of the Author. In Two Volumes: Volume 2*, W. S. Dobson (ed.), (London: G. Cowie & Co., 1825), p. 82

2. These twelve are in the privileged position of witnessing Christ's teaching, actions and life events first hand.
3. In the period leading up to and during his trial, death, resurrection and ascension, the Gospel evidence portrays Christ instructing apostles to expand and grow the society of believers according to the direction and example he has laid down.
4. In this way the Church finds its foundation and formation in Christ himself.
5. Almost immediately, apostles begin implementing a structure of ministerial ordering within each local church.¹³⁷

Does this suggest that Gore does not see surrounding society and culture having an influence in shaping the Church as it is being established? Not at all. Cox offers a helpful commentary on Gore's ecclesiological thinking in this regard when he notes that whilst Gore concedes that the Jewish background and Greco-Roman surroundings will have shaped some periphery marks of the Church, it nevertheless grew from Jesus' deliberate design and intention in every significant way.¹³⁸ Gore believes that the New Testament reveals evidence clearly portraying a method behind Christ's plans for how believers were to be drawn into his life through the Spirit. This 'method' exposes Christ's true intention for the way in which this gathered society of believers was to be developed and ordered into the future. Gore says:

We can conceive ... easily enough how our Lord might have cast the truth which he came to teach mankind broadcast over society, and left

¹³⁷ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), pp.1 - 10, 33, 37... & Charles Gore, *Orders and Unity* (London: John Murray, 1909), pp. 115 - 117

¹³⁸ Cox, *Priesthood in a New Millennium* (2004), p. 26

to make its own way. But the more you examine the Gospels, the more you will note that his method was not in fact this, but the opposite. More and more he concentrates all his efforts on that little band beside him, whom by steady discipline he was preparing the nucleus of his new and distinctive society.¹³⁹

Cox is once again obliging in helping us outline how in Gore's understanding 'Jesus' calling of disciples, his bestowing of rites and his claiming to be Messiah of a new kingdom all pointed to clear intentionality. Whilst (for Gore) the Church is not to be equated with the kingdom of God, the Church does represent that kingdom on earth as a visible society which is the Body of Christ'.¹⁴⁰ It is certainly true that Gore considers Christ to have instituted a society into which all Christians are called, a point clearly evident when he states: 'Christ did not, according to this view, encourage his disciples to form societies; he instituted a society for them to belong to as the means of belonging to him.'¹⁴¹

Gore is not only adamant that the Church was instituted by Christ, but that it is the only mechanism through which Christ's truth is to be disseminated in the world. He continues:

We should notice that so deeply was it impressed upon the mind of the primitive church that Jesus (if the expression may be pardoned) staked his all on the Church, that there does not appear the least suggestion in the New Testament that this great salvation or his covenant of grace is to be found outside it. There is, in other words, no idea to be found there of a membership

¹³⁹ Gore, *The Mission of the Church* (1892), p. 10

¹⁴⁰ Cox, *Priesthood in a New Millennium* (2004), p. 26

¹⁴¹ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 5

of Christ which is not also membership in the Church which is the New Israel.¹⁴²

According to Gore, the Church begins with a small group of individuals who Christ chooses to focus all of his attentions upon, teaching them by word and example before encouraging them to go out into the world to grow their number according to the parameters he has laid down. Through them, Christ is the Church's foundation and focus.

From this standpoint we will now move on to discover, how Gore considers that the Church is united through its authentic adherence to the apostle's teaching and authority, apostolic succession and ministerial orders. He says: 'It is in fact impossible to exaggerate the intimacy with which the episcopal succession is bound up with the fixed canon of scripture and the permanent and stable creed to constitute what can rightly be called 'historical Christianity''.¹⁴³

Therefore, we will now move to consider the Church's mechanisms for common unity in more depth, and this will naturally lead us to consider what Gore has to say about ministerial ordering and apostolic succession.

c) Common Unity of the Church

In considering what constitutes this sacred society of believers, Gore draws upon Newman's earlier doctrine of the 'visible Church'. Newman eloquently translates the Church as 'the gift which Christ let drop from him as the mantle

¹⁴² Gore, *The Philosophy of the Good Life: Being the Gifford Lectures delivered in the University of St. Andrews* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1935 [1930]), pp. 172 - 173

¹⁴³ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 196

from Elijah, the pledge and token of his never failing grace from age to age'.¹⁴⁴ Gore is not one for indulging in the beautiful poetic language of this earlier churchman, nor does he come to all the same conclusions regarding denominational superiority,¹⁴⁵ but he does share Newman's concern to assert the central importance of the temporal visible society of united believers representing and providing access to the perfect eternally worshipful society of heaven.

In so doing, Gore is keen to impress upon his readers that the temporal church maintains its authenticity through its allegiance to the apostolic teaching and ordering. For Waddell, Gore communicates a conviction that, 'Apostolic faith and order belong together as a part of the 'transmitted trust'... the early church was in no doubt on this score'.¹⁴⁶ It is certainly true that, for Gore, the early church evidence points to Christ having formed a society into which all early Christians were called. It is also clear to Gore that this society found a common unity through its belief in Christ and in certain structures, principles and beliefs passed down and defended from error by the apostles' teaching and oversight. In this way the apostles' teaching and oversight is regarded as the focus for unity from the very outset of the formation of the Church following Christ's ascension.

¹⁴⁴ John Henry Newman, *PPS4- 11: Sermon 11 – The Communion of Saints* (updated: 8/6/2015). Found at The National Institute of Newman Studies <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/parochial/volume4/sermon11.html> (Accessed 10/2/2016)

¹⁴⁵ Newman's investigations would eventually lead him to abandoning Anglicanism in favour of what he considered to be the more authentic Roman Model, converting to the Roman Catholic Church in 1895. Gore, on the other hand, would use his investigations in many of his writings to further assert the authenticity of the Anglican ideal, defending the orders of the Anglican Church against both external and internal criticism regarding its validity, and most notably in: Charles Gore, *Roman Catholic Claims* (London: Rivington's, 1889).

¹⁴⁶ Waddell, *Charles Gore: Radical Anglican* (2014), p. 76

Justifying his stance, Gore draws upon evidence to be found within the New Testament, especially the Gospels. He uses St Matthew's Gospel as one example, and claims we can identify clear intention in that Gospel regarding how the Church was to be ordered and exercise authority. He says: 'St Matthew's Gospel ascribes to our Lord with much greater distinctiveness the intention to found his Church – his new Israel: a body representing him and exercising authority over its members in his name.'¹⁴⁷ Thirty years later, Knox concurs with this overall assessment by Gore when he outlines how the apostles 'were given the privilege of a peculiarly close association with (Jesus) in order that after his departure they might be able to carry on the task of preaching to all mankind the salvation which he had come to earth to bring men'.¹⁴⁸

Whilst the Gospels speak to Gore of Christ's intentions for the Church, the book of Acts shows that church actually growing up into an ordered society under the apostle's tutelage and this, to his mind, demanded a certain level of allegiance. Acts provides hard evidence for the way the Church was to mature under the apostle's guidance,¹⁴⁹ and pondering the importance of the Church for salvation, Gore pleads for his readers to 'notice with what clearness the religion of Jesus Christ appears in history as a visible society, and nothing else than a visible society. Its story is told simply enough in the Acts of the Apostles. In that book being a Christian means nothing else than membership in the visible body, the Church.'¹⁵⁰ In order to get a better grasp of this, let us explore

¹⁴⁷ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), p. 48: Matthew 16: 18 - 19; 18: 17 - 18; 28: 19 - 20

¹⁴⁸ Wilfred. L. Knox, *The Catholic Movement in the Church of England* (London: Phillip, Allan & Co., 1923), p. 90

¹⁴⁹ Acts 9: 31; 11: 26; 13: 1; 15: 41; 16: 5

¹⁵⁰ Gore, *The Mission of the Church* (1892), p. 12

in more depth the overall testimony Gore appears to draw from various passages in Acts in order to come to this conclusion and what these passages say to Gore about the concept of the Church.

The book of Acts speaks to Gore about the spreading Christian movement and how the Church developed following Christ's ascension.¹⁵¹ He sees evidence that the Church was unified by the authority of the apostles in Jerusalem; Paul is accepted by them which gives his ministry the authority it needs to become more widely accepted and their decisions were determinative for local churches.¹⁵² Gore sees a clear correlation between the growing strength of a church and the influence of the apostles' direction upon them.¹⁵³

We should note how Gore draws upon a double usage of the notion of *church* in these passages. On the one hand, *the Church* is a group of local believers forming a small society adapted to the needs of their location, whilst on the other it is a centralised body or movement under the authority and governance of the apostles.¹⁵⁴ For Gore, this provides evidence for how *the Church* as a universal body advances from place to place. The local bodies, known as *the churches*, are the expansions of the universal body, *the Church*, guided by the 'apostles' doctrine', continuing in the 'apostles' fellowship' and falling under 'the common apostolic authority'.¹⁵⁵ Amidst all the diversity necessary for each individual church to flourish at a local level in localised cultures and societies,

¹⁵¹ Gore, *The Mission of the Church* (1892), pp. 10 - 11

¹⁵² Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), pp. 44 - 46; Gore, *The Mission of the Church* (1892), pp. 38 - 39; Acts 2: 41 - 47; 9: 31; 11: 26; 16: 4 - 5

¹⁵³ Gore, *The Mission of the Church* (1892), p. 39; Acts 15: 41; 16: 4 - 5

¹⁵⁴ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), p. 5

¹⁵⁵ Gore, *The Mission of the Church* (1892), p. 12

the apostolic teaching and oversight serves as a central point of unity and conformity.

Gore continues to provide further evidence for his argument by drawing upon the New Testament epistles. To his mind, the entire letter to the Ephesians and the pastoral epistles together with certain passages from 1 Corinthians all show a clear understanding of a distinction between 'those within and those without. Christianity is not a set of opinions which people may hold... To be a Christian means to be within that apostolic society...' ¹⁵⁶ Here we begin to see how, for Gore, it is not enough just to hold opinions which simply fall in line with the Church's teaching, one must actively be a member of the Church's unified body under the apostolic teaching. A group can only claim the name of 'the Church' if it is itself a society holding true under apostolic oversight. This is a view with which Gore's contemporary, Moberly, entirely concurs. In Moberly's words, such unity 'is in scripture direct and complete. It is there as an ideal, not implicit only but expressed, not in the early aspirations of the Church only, but in that which was divinely set before the Church, before as yet the Church had begun to be'. ¹⁵⁷ For Gore and Moberly then, Christ's intention was the visible Church and they find clear evidence for this in the Gospels. Then, in the other New Testament material, Moberly and Gore see evidence for how that church began to grow up into an ordered society under the apostles' guidance as local churches with a shared unity based on the

¹⁵⁶ 1 Timothy; 2 Timothy; Titus; 1 Corinthians 5: 9 - 13; Gore, *The Mission of the Church* (1892), pp. 12 - 13

¹⁵⁷ Robert Campbell Moberly, *Ministerial Priesthood* (London: John Murray, 1913), p. 7

apostolic teaching and oversight. Interestingly, this is once again a view that Knox, a few decades later, finds entirely agreeable.¹⁵⁸

Moving on from the New Testament, Gore considers evidence from the apostolic and sub-apostolic eras. Just like the material to be found in the New Testament, Gore sees in the material from the Church Fathers not just good theological thought around the ordering and ministry of the Church, but also evidence for how things actually were on the ground at that time. Gore claims that the First Letter of Clement to the Corinthians,¹⁵⁹ ‘comes under the immediate shadow of the apostolic influence and teaching’¹⁶⁰ on account of his belief that it was written around the same time as the Gospel of St John.¹⁶¹ Whether or not the Gospel of St John and Clement’s epistle share an authorship period does not detract from Gore’s more central point, that Clement’s letter provides the earliest Christian evidence outside of the New Testament for the nature of the visible Church.¹⁶² In it Gore sees clear evidence for the Church being an ordered and united society of believers under the apostolic ordering. For Clement this was the common practice at the time of his writing which he sought to uphold. And so Gore wishes to bring to our attention that within this epistle ‘there is no conception of Christianity...

¹⁵⁸ Knox wrote his appraisal of the Anglo-Catholic movement within the Church of England some 30 years after Gore wrote *The Mission of the Church*. See: Wilfred. L. Knox, *The Catholic Movement in the Church of England* (1923), pp. 90 - 92

¹⁵⁹ Known simply as 1 Clement. There are two letters written to the Corinthians attributed to Clement, the second of which is commonly agreed by scholars to be inauthentic. See: John A. McGuckin, *The SCM Press A-Z of Patristic Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2005 [2004]) & Johannes Quasten, *Patrology: Volume One* (Notre Dame , IN: Ave Maria Press, 1950), p. 43

¹⁶⁰ Gore, *The Mission of the Church* (1892), p. 13

¹⁶¹ Please note that there remains an open debate regarding the exact date of St John’s Gospel: See, Leon Morris, *The New International Commentary of the New Testament: The Gospel According to St John Revised* (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1995), pp. 12 - 13

¹⁶² See: McGuckin, *The SCM Press A-Z of Patristic Theology* (2005 [2004]) & Johannes Quasten, *Patrology: Volume One* (1950), p. 43

except this conception of an actual society, with its divinely established order and its officers commissioned by apostolic authority'.¹⁶³

Building on this, Gore begins a broader overview of what he calls the 'record of history'. In doing so, he sees evidence of 'the Church in different parts of the world assuming different characteristics'.¹⁶⁴ For example, he notes how the Western Roman model has been characterised by order and discipline, whilst the Eastern 'Alexandrian' model is more concerned with the truth, as a way of educating, satisfying and attracting the 'intellect and life of man'.¹⁶⁵ Rather than proving a stumbling block to Gore's conception of unity found in shared ordering, for Gore this variation and diversity in approach only serves to bring into more clarity those things which unify and are common to all; 'the common underlying creed and conception of the visible church'.¹⁶⁶ The apostolic succession and threefold ministry are constitutive factors of this.

Using a quote from Tertullian, Gore drives his point home:

So long as he (Jesus) was living on earth, spoke himself either openly to the people, or apart to his disciples. From amongst these he had attached to his person twelve especially who were destined to be teachers of the nations. Accordingly, when one of these had fallen away, the remaining eleven received his command, as he was departing to the Father after his resurrection, to go and teach the nations, who were to be baptised into the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. At once, then, the Apostles, whose mission this title indicates, after adding Matthias to their number... and after

¹⁶³ Gore, *The Mission of the Church* (1892), p. 13

¹⁶⁴ Gore, *The Mission of the Church* (1892), p. 14

¹⁶⁵ Gore, *The Mission of the Church* (1892), p. 14

¹⁶⁶ Gore, *The Mission of the Church* (1892), p. 14

receiving the strength of the Holy Ghost to enable them to work miracles and preach, first of all bore witness to the faith in Judea and established churches, and afterwards, going out into the world, proclaimed the same teaching of the same faith to the nations, and forthwith founded churches in every city, from which all other churches in their turn have received the tradition of the faith and the seeds of doctrine; yes, and are daily receiving, that they may become churches; and it is on this account that they too will be reckoned apostolic, as being the offspring of apostolic churches...¹⁶⁷

In this passage, Gore sees evidence of a fount of grace, authority and teaching starting with the Apostles and disseminating out through space and time to each individual church in its turn, providing them with continuity and unity.

We will see later in this chapter how Gore also considers the Spirit to play a central role in the authorisation and direction of the ministerial orders of the Church. We shall also move to thinking more about the importance of apostolic succession in Gore's framework, and will explore what Gore uncovers regarding the threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons. Before we move on to those areas of thought, however, Gore offers us one further statement that serves well in this instance to round off his thinking and draw this particular section on the unity of the Church to a close. He says:

It is reasonable to think that, if he (Christ) came to leave among mankind the inestimable treasures of redemptive truth and grace, he would not have cast them abroad among men, but given them a stable home in a visible and duly

¹⁶⁷ Gore, *The Mission of the Church* (1892), p. 14 - 15; Tertullian, '*On the prescription of heretics (de praescriptione haereticorum)*', XX. In *Tertullian - On the Testimony of the Soul and on the "Prescription" of Heretics*, T. Herbert Bindley (trans.), (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1914), pp. 30 - 61

constituted society – a society simple enough in its principles to be capable of adaptation to the varying needs of ages and nations and individuals, simple enough to be catholic, but organised enough to take its place amidst the institutions of the world with a recognisable and permanent character.¹⁶⁸

For Gore, this is the church he sees manifest through history, instituted by Christ, sharing a common creed, maintaining the apostolic teaching and succession and sharing a threefold ministry. It is the exploration of the threefold ministry to which we now turn.

d) The Threefold Ministry: Bishops, Priests and Deacons

Gore considers the threefold ministry to be both an essential platform for the good ordering of the Church and to carry divine influence in its formation and development. As we noted earlier, this stance differed greatly from his fellow bishop, Lightfoot.¹⁶⁹ According to Treloar, their difference in opinion can be outlined thus: Lightfoot discerned the ministry as ‘a process of evolution from below’, whilst Gore considers it to be a process of ‘devolution from above’.¹⁷⁰ Lightfoot’s perception of ministerial orders seems to come from a task centred approach – one which sees ministry growing from a desire to address the essential tasks that need doing from within the growing society of believers. On the other hand, Gore’s understanding seems to stem from a belief that these orders develop in the early church from a direct response to the promptings of the Spirit as the community grows spiritually and in obedience to God’s will. Gore thus identifies a spiritual core to ministerial orders and

¹⁶⁸ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 10

¹⁶⁹ See Lightfoot, *The Christian Ministry* (1901), pp. 7 - 25

¹⁷⁰ Geoffrey R. Treloar, *Lightfoot the Historian: The Nature and Role of History in the Life and Thought of J.B. Lightfoot (1828 - 1889) as Churchman and Scholar* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), p. 205

asserts with much firmness how ordination was regarded sacramentally to include a bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon the candidate through the laying-on of hands from the very beginning.¹⁷¹ It is no wonder then that the two come to such differing conclusions. In defence of his stance, Gore begins his discussion of the threefold ministry with what he considers to be the earliest evidence we have, the Pastoral Epistles and 1 Clement.¹⁷²

In these letters, Gore interprets a dividing of what he deems as 'local' and 'general' ministry. Local ministry is that which serves the regular functions of the local church or group of churches. The general ministry is that of the apostles or evangelists, those who represent the wider apostolic authority. Explaining this he says: 'In the Pastoral Epistles, then, we find in the church a general and local ministry... the local ministry consists of presbyters also called 'bishops' and deacons'.¹⁷³ These localised ministries then are structured in a way to serve the local Christian body and to ensure its day-to-day functioning and flourishing. 'The general ministry – which represents the original and central authority of the church – consists of the apostle and his delegates... who, though supervising for the time a church or group of churches... do not belong to those churches, but represent the common apostolic control over all churches alike.'¹⁷⁴ 'In the period of the Pastoral Epistles, then, we have the central or apostolic officers, apostles and evangelists, exercising a more or less general ministry in the churches, and

¹⁷¹ Gore, *The Mission of the Church* (1892), pp. 166-169

¹⁷² See fn. 28

¹⁷³ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), pp. 115 - 116

¹⁷⁴ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), p. 115

the local presbytery in each church, consisting of the bishops, with the assistant ministry of the deacons.¹⁷⁵

Gore is right to interpret the Pastoral Epistles and 1 Clement clearly using the terms bishop (episkopos), presbyter (presbyteros – commonly priest or elder), and deacon (diakonos) to refer to ministerial functions at the local level. Whilst these epistles use all three terms to refer to differing functions, Gore notes how bishop and presbyter are often used interchangeably in these churches at this time to describe different elements of the same person's role in the assembly. In these letters Gore finds evidence to assert that, 'practically... the presbyters and the bishops of the local church are the same persons. St Paul can address the presbyters of Ephesus as those whom the Holy Ghost hath made bishops; and he can tell Titus to choose presbyters carefully, because the bishop must be blameless: and Clement can speak of presbyters as holding the bishop's office'.¹⁷⁶

According to this view, it would appear that the presbyter-bishops were given the responsibility of founding the local Christian community by the apostles and represent the apostles in their absence.¹⁷⁷

Gore then turns his attention to the later witness of Ignatius.¹⁷⁸ To Gore's mind, Ignatius's writings have a different more distinctively eastern influence, but the testimony found seems to provide similar evidence as to the identification of roles with one notable exception; referring to bishops and priests as separate individuals. Gore outlines how Ignatius, who himself is already a bishop at the

¹⁷⁵ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), p. 117

¹⁷⁶ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), p. 117; Acts 20: 17-28; Titus 1: 5-7; Clem. 44.

¹⁷⁷ See Knox, *The Catholic Movement in the Church of England* (1923), p. 92

¹⁷⁸ 107 AD

time of writing, is 'hard pressed to deliver his message to the churches before he is taken away' to be martyred,¹⁷⁹ and in the course of doing so has two main points he wishes to communicate. The first is 'the truth of the incarnation, that Christ, the very Son of God, did really take our human nature'.¹⁸⁰ The second is an 'insistence upon the truth that God's message to man is enshrined in those visible societies which have for their ministers - bishops, priests and deacons, "without which three orders no Church has a title to the name".¹⁸¹ Ignatius seems concerned to defend the church he is leaving behind from heresy or destruction from within. As such he is keen to assert those things that are central to its continued flourishing. Gore identifies how Ignatius 'pleads passionately with them to rally round their officers, that is, the bishop, presbyters and deacons in each church. The bishop is conceived of... as representing Christ while on earth... among his apostles, who are represented by the presbyters'.¹⁸²

In turning to Ignatius at this point, Gore reveals two significant things. First, how in such a short space of time the threefold ministry began settling itself out so that the bishop was no longer one and the same as the presbyter but a completely different order of individual, becoming the chief officer of the local church or churches. The second is how, following the apostles' deaths, bishops begin standing in the apostles' place as Christ's representatives. Gore

¹⁷⁹ Gore, *The Mission of the Church* (1892), p. 14

¹⁸⁰ Gore, *The Mission of the Church* (1892), p. 14

¹⁸¹ Gore, *The Mission of the Church* (1892), p. 14: Ignatius, *ad Trall*, 3.

¹⁸² Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), p. 120

then draws on the evidence found in Clement, Irenaeus and Tertullian,¹⁸³ to suggest that John the Apostle may have been one of the first to separate out presbyters and bishops in these roles.¹⁸⁴

Be that as it may, this is not the outline of developing orders evidenced in every part of the early church.¹⁸⁵ Gore returns to the Acts of the Apostles to provide evidence that at Jerusalem, Jesus' brother James was already exercising a localised ministry which Gore associates as similar to that of a diocesan bishop, James being the head of the Church in Jerusalem with presbyters operating under him.¹⁸⁶ Here then, we already see the threefold office in operation at a very early stage of the Church's history. Might St John have looked to Jerusalem for inspiration on how to model an increasingly complex and growing church? Is this what Clement, Irenaeus and Tertullian report? Gore does not elaborate further. What he does assert, however, is that the orders of bishop, priest and deacon were present in the very earliest models of the Church and very quickly these separated out to form three distinctive

¹⁸³ Clement, 'Who is the Rich Man that Shall be Saved? (*Liber Quis Dives Salvetur*)', XLII. In *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325: Volume 2: Fathers of the Second Century: Hermas, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Clement of Alexandria*, A. Cleveland Coxe, Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson (eds.), William Wilson (trans.), (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1885), p. 603; Irenaeus, 'Against Heresies (*Adversus Haereses*)' III, XI. In *The Ante-Nicene Fathers. Volume 1: The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus*, A. Cleveland Coxe, Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson (eds.), M. Dodds (trans.), (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1885), pp. 426 – 429; Tertullian 'Anti-Marcion (*Adversus Marcionem*)' IV, X. In *The Ante-Nicene Fathers. Volume 3: Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian. I. Apologetic; II. Anti-Marcion; III. Ethical*, A. Cleveland Coxe, Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson (eds.), Peter Homes (trans.), (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1885), pp. 357 - 360

¹⁸⁴ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), p. 124

¹⁸⁵ It is probably wise at this point just to restate for the reader that this section is not concerned with my own independent historical work and criticism, which would only prove a distraction from the main objective of this investigation. Therefore, it is not advantageous for us to go too deeply into any controversy concerning contemporary opinions over the early formation of ministerial orders. It is enough to note that Charles Gore's claims may be challenged with the assertions of some modern scholarship (as fn. 219 below).

¹⁸⁶ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), p. 118; Acts 13: 1

offices. Although Gore recognises exceptions to the rule, he outlines how this seems to have happened very early on in Jerusalem, whilst in many other places it seems to have occurred over a time-frame of no more than a century.¹⁸⁷

According to Gore, James also appears to have exercised the authority of an apostle as well as an independent bishop from very early on, as his episcopate is outlined as succeeding not to the other apostles, but to Christ. As evidence for this, Gore uses a fragment from Hegesippus' writings preserved in the works of Eusebius, where Hegesippus is quoted as saying, 'James, the brother of the Lord, succeeded to government of the Church in conjunction with the apostles'.¹⁸⁸ Following James' death the office passes down in succession to Simeon,¹⁸⁹ but according to Gore, this continuing office does not revert to looking to the other apostles for its authority after James' death as one might expect, but continues to look to Christ himself, thus retaining the status of an apostleship.¹⁹⁰

This seems to be the pattern that grew up all over the Eastern churches of Palestine, Syria and Asia, each bishop having autonomy and taking their authority directly from Christ. Gore is convinced that the witness of history

¹⁸⁷ Whilst some recent scholarship seems to loosely agree with Gore's broader outline of the development of ministerial orders, when it comes to the details most modern scholars would suggest a rather more complex situation developing over the first three centuries of Christianity. Galot for instance considers that the threefold ordering can first be identified in Antioch, not Jerusalem as Gore concludes: see Jean Galot, *Theology of the Priesthood*, Roger Balducelli (trans.) (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), p. 171 - 172.

¹⁸⁸ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), p. 118. Hegesippus was a Christian chronicler of the early church. His works are now entirely lost, but parts are recorded in the works of Eusebius. Eusebius, *Church History, book ii. xxiii. 4*, G. A. Williamson (trans.), (London: Penguin Books, 1989 [1965]), p. 58 - 62

¹⁸⁹ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), p. 118. Eusebius uses testimony from Hegesippus in recording the succession of Simeon. Eusebius, *Church History, book iii. xi. 1-2* (1989 [1965]), p. 79

¹⁹⁰ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), p. 118

shows how the 'monarchical constitution' (the rule of one bishop in each church) grew in the East to become the uncontested form of church government under the sanction of the apostles. In the West, on the other hand, Gore interprets a much more hierarchical structure having developed where apostolic men instituted bishops for each church and that their authority derived from these apostles, with the idea of each bishop directly representing the monarchy of Christ seeming less prominent.

Nevertheless, in both regions Gore identifies the threefold ministry acting as a central focus for unity as the Church matured, with it serving a significant spiritual, missional, governmental and functional purpose for the growing church.¹⁹¹ Here, it is helpful once again to draw upon Knox's later contribution as he appraises this period more succinctly, but with remarkable consistency to the thoughts of Gore. He says:

Thus at the close of the Apostolic age we find that the normal Christian community is governed by a group of local presbyters appointed by the Apostle, who himself pays visits to the community as far as the circumstances permit... In certain circumstances personal representatives (of the Apostle) are sent to reside more or less permanently at important centres in order to supervise the local community and those of the adjoining region. These Apostolic delegates are for all intents and purposes equal in rank to the Apostles.

¹⁹¹ Charles Gore tracks the development of the episcopate from the New Testament through until the late 2nd Century. He draws upon patristic evidence from the Didache, Polycarp, Clement, The Shepherd of Hermes, Ignatius, Irenaeus & Tertullian amongst others. See Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), pp.242 - 297

From this state of affairs it is but a small step to the position which meets us in the early second century... in all the large Christian centres we find a college of presbyters at the head of which stands a bishop.¹⁹²

Gore interprets this ordering as having divine authority on account of its supporting evidence in scripture, its sanctioning by the apostles and its general acceptance by the people of God (as attested to in the later historical evidence).¹⁹³ The fact that this model grew up everywhere in a consistent fashion and that everywhere there was development headed for the 'same goal', also speaks to Gore of a divine institution that Christ, as the Church's head, had impressed upon it.¹⁹⁴ For Gore, 'a ministry of bishops, priests and deacons, of apostolic descent and divine authorisation, is the centre of unity in each local Christian society, and that bishop is charged with the administration of that worship and discipline, and with guardianship of that doctrine, which belong to the whole church'.¹⁹⁵

As we look deeper into Gore's understanding of how these three offices work themselves out over the passage of time, it would appear that each person's ministry when called to a higher office retains elements of the lower. This is inferred, of course, by the fact that the bishop was originally also referred to as the presbyter in the early textual evidence, but even as the two offices begin to be seen independently, it should be noted how Gore does not consider bishops relinquishing their calling to the priesthood despite being escalated to

¹⁹² Knox, *The Catholic Movement in the Church of England* (1923), p. 93

¹⁹³ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 301

¹⁹⁴ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 303

¹⁹⁵ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 299

the higher role of authority. Even as the head overseer of the local college of presbyters, a bishop remains one of their number.

This is not then an ordering along the lines of that of St Paul's 'gifts' where each person has a select skill set which commends them to a certain position, like that of teachers, evangelists, prophets etc., although it does not exclude or devalue such gifts being present among their number.¹⁹⁶ The threefold ministry in Gore's understanding is fundamentally ascertained by spiritual calling and service which is then recognised by those already in authority and the wider congregation.¹⁹⁷ So then, a bishop continues to exercise certain priestly functions in continuity even after they have been elevated to the higher calling, especially in regards to liturgical and sacramental undertakings.¹⁹⁸ In like manner, the bishop and priest continue to exercise a role of service in keeping with the diaconate.

Despite the subtle differences between East and West that we noted earlier, Gore considers that, generally speaking, as the threefold ministry matured and each church gained its 'local representative of apostolic authority', so the title of bishop began to be used more and more to distinguish them from the other presbyters under their charge.¹⁹⁹ Bishops thus began to be identified more readily as the 'successors to the apostles',²⁰⁰ a point alluded to in our earlier quotation from Knox.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁶ 1 Corinthians 12

¹⁹⁷ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 301

¹⁹⁸ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 299

¹⁹⁹ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), pp. 302 - 303

²⁰⁰ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 303

²⁰¹ See fn. 56. Knox, *The Catholic Movement in the Church of England* (1923), p. 93

From this point of understanding Gore considers the essential part that apostolic succession has to play in the Church's long-term structure and authenticity. According to Cox, Gore relies heavily upon the Tractarian teaching of apostolic succession for his understanding of the ministerial orders of the Church.²⁰² Cox is right to make this claim since apostolic succession is central to Gore's thinking and he spends much time writing about it. In one of his many statements explaining his thoughts on apostolic succession, Gore states:

Christ, in founding his Church, founded also a ministry in the Church in the persons of his apostles. These Apostles must be supposed to have had a temporary function in their capacity as founders under Christ. In this capacity they held an office by its very nature not perpetual – the office of bearing the original witness of Christ's resurrection and making the original proclamation of the Gospel. But underlying this was another – a pastorate of souls, a stewardship of divine mysteries. This office, instituted in their persons, was intended to become perpetual, and that by being transmitted from its first depositories.²⁰³

Gore considers the apostles to serve two essential functions in the development of the early church. First they were witnesses to the events of Christ's incarnation and resurrection. He says: 'Jesus Christ taught by events. He made his apostles not so much prophets as witnesses'.²⁰⁴ This role in Christ's design for his church was for them alone to undertake. Second,

²⁰² Cox reflects on Newman's confidence in how one could trace the succession of bishops in the Church of England through to the apostolate from St Peter to the present day: Cox, *Priesthood in a New Millennium* (2004), p. 25

²⁰³ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), pp. 58 - 59

²⁰⁴ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 58

however, they operated a stewardship over the essentials of faith, such as discipline, sacramental actions, ordering and the care of souls. They were to guard these from error or deviation and then to pass them on to future generations of leaders who would take their place as chief authority under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. For Gore, this apostolic succession is essential in guarding the Church from error, preserving its ongoing life and fuelling its future development.²⁰⁵ He states:

It was intended that there should be in each generation an authoritative stewardship of the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ and a recognised power to transmit it, derived from above by apostolic descent. The men who were from time to time to hold the various offices involved in the ministry would receive their capacity to minister in whatever capacity, their qualifying consecration, from above, in such sense that every ministerial act would be performed under the shelter of a commission, received by the transmission of the original pastoral authority which had been delegated by Christ himself to his apostles.²⁰⁶

To Gore's mind this succession is an essential element in the ongoing authenticity of the Church's ministerial orders. Each apostle, and later bishop, passes on to their successor the functions they have held in authority from their predecessor, and their predecessor before them. Thus as successive bishops pass down to their successors the authority they received from the apostles, so the principle of apostolic succession is secured. Gore clarifies:

²⁰⁵ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 108

²⁰⁶ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 59

The local president, the bishop, received his authority not from the congregation, but from those who were bishops before him, back to the apostles and apostolic men. Therefore, even in the smallest community, the bishop represented the great church; and the fellowship of the bishops amongst themselves kept all the local churches together.²⁰⁷

At this point, we need to make a distinction between the succession of bishops and the sanctioning of priests and deacons. Whilst bishops have their office passed on in succession, priests and deacons receive their office at the hands of their local bishop. Gore's interpretation understands 'chief authority laying with the bishop, and accordingly episcopal ordination was regarded as essential to constitute a man a member of the clergy and give him ministerial commission'.²⁰⁸ Drawing upon a wide span of evidence from the Church Fathers,²⁰⁹ Gore emphasises (with much vigour) the point that only bishops may ordain and no priest may pass their office on directly:

There have always existed in the Church ministers, who, beside the ordinary exercise of their ministry, possess the power of transmitting it; they may, so far, be one or many in each community; but they ordain men to holy offices of the Church, they are only fulfilling the function intrusted to them out of the apostolic fount of authority. There are other ministers, again, who have certain clearly understood functions committed to them, but not of transmitting their office. Should these ever attempt to transmit it their act would be considered invalid. For this is the Church principle: that no ministry is valid which is

²⁰⁷ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), pp. 145 - 146

²⁰⁸ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 299

²⁰⁹ Gore uses a vast bank of evidence from the Church Fathers to reach his conclusion. These include: Ignatius, Clement of Alexandria, Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom & Epiphanius. See Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), pp. 143 - 151

assumed, which a man takes upon himself, or which is merely delegated to him from below. That ministerial act alone is valid which is covered by a ministerial commission received from above by succession from the apostles.²¹⁰

Not only does Gore consider that bishops are the only ones with the authority to ordain, he continues on to claim that it seems completely improbable that any 'presbyter had in any age the power to ordain... it is absolutely certain that for a large number of centuries it had been understood beyond all question that only bishops could ordain and that presbyters had no episcopal powers'.²¹¹ This is a view which again sees Gore sided in opposition to Lightfoot, who through his historical investigation of 'the Christian Ministry' draws conclusions that to Gore's mind seriously undermined the Church's ministerial orders.²¹² For Lightfoot, the scriptural evidence of the New Testament shows how bishop and presbyter were originally one and the same. He seems to interpret little of special significance in either order apart from the task of their office, apparently seeing both born out of societal practicality and need.²¹³ His conclusions concern Gore greatly as they seem to leave the door open to a devaluation of the authority of the Episcopate and the place of the Presbyterate, possibly even paving the way for wider acceptance of non-

²¹⁰ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), pp. 62 - 63

²¹¹ It is difficult to prove or disprove Gore's assertion that presbyters have never ordained other priests from a functional perspective. However, irrelevant of the evidence for or against his assertion, it is clear that Gore is more concerned with the principle of only bishops ordaining priests from a spiritual perspective. This stems from his interest concerning the validity of orders. To his mind, even if a priest were to perform an ordination it would be ontologically ineffective. Gore presses home the point that it seems unlikely that the Church at any stage prior to the reformation authorised ordination by anyone other than a bishop. Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p.305. See also Waddell, *Charles Gore: Radical Anglican* (2014), pp. xxxi & 78 - 79

²¹² See: Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), pp. 311 - 314

²¹³ See Lightfoot, *The Christian Ministry* (1901), pp. 7 - 25

episcopal ordination. To Gore, such a stance threatened the very foundations of the Church and its ministry, not to mention the Anglican tradition.

Nonetheless, Gore owns that others may have differing views of who may have the authority to ordain, but himself remains convinced that all the significant historical facts of the first fifteen hundred years of the church point to such powers always having been limited to the rank of bishop.²¹⁴ He also recognises the consequences of this assertion for other denominations who have taken to allowing ordinations to be conducted by fellow presbyters.²¹⁵ His response is to recognise the great gift these other denominations have bestowed upon the world through their ministry, but contends that until that ministry fully enters back into the structure of apostolic succession, the entire church remains in some way flawed, because he considers apostolic succession to be one of Christ's intended mechanisms for unity.²¹⁶

In an age when ecumenism has achieved so much by way of breaking down barriers, such statements can sound unhelpful. As regrettable as they seem, however, we need to remember to read Gore in his own historical situation, and as Waddell contends, there does nonetheless appear to be something of fundamental importance in the Anglican understanding of the historic

²¹⁴ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), pp. 303 - 304

²¹⁵ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), pp. 304 - 305

²¹⁶ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), pp. 304 - 306. Waddell is right to point out here that there is something extremely important about the Anglican emphasis upon the historic episcopate and its succession and that the Church of today needs to be wary of disregarding it to its own detriment. See Waddell, *Charles Gore: Radical Anglican* (2014), p. xxxi. Equally however, I would argue that modern movements in ecumenism have enabled a wider vision than was commonplace at the time of Gore's writing and we can today see how churches beyond that of just Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Anglicanism and Lutheranism are a part of the bigger picture of what the Church is. Although the title of bishop may not be used in some other mainstream denominations, structurally they can look very similar. It may be this similarity itself that can form a beginning to recognisable unity.

episcopate and the threefold ministry for providing authentic structure and oversight.²¹⁷

Gore's underlying principle about ministerial ordering and those authorised to ordain remains an important piece in the puzzle if we are to properly understand how he views the Church. This is because Gore understands the sacrament of ordination to be regarded from the very earliest of times as an act bringing about ontological change within the individual. For such to be authentic and effective, it is necessary that those conducting ordination are appropriately chosen by God and recognised by the wider church body (both past and present) to carry the authority to undertake them.

As with all the sacraments, Gore considers that the physical material of the human body is of the earth, but through the redemptive credentials of Christ, the would be priest, during ordination, is transformed at consecration into being a gift of the kingdom – a symbol and spiritual conduit of those same Christ-like redemptive qualities which draw people through the Spirit into the Body and life of Christ. By way of example, Gore uses what happens at the consecration of bread and wine during the Eucharist as a comparison. He says:

A consecration from above comes upon the sacrament; the bread which is of the earth, which man offers for the divine acceptance, receiving the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but Eucharist, made up of two things, an earthly and a heavenly... we have the material offered from below and the

²¹⁷ Waddell, *Charles Gore: Radical Anglican* (2014), p. xxxi

empowering consecration from above. It is just these same two elements, then, that are present to constitute the ministry.²¹⁸

The person remains the same person, but at a much deeper level, a similar spiritual change is true as for all the sacraments. Ordination, to Gore, does not constitute the mere granting of an office or the giving of a charge (although both these have their place), but most importantly it is, to steal Treloar's phrase, a 'devolving' of the Spirit of Christ's priesthood directly from Christ in his high-priestly state, channelled through the bishop who stands in the apostle's shoes.²¹⁹ It is this bestowing of the Holy Spirit drawing the individual into sharing in Christ's priesthood that brings about an ontological change within the person, and only the bishop has the apostolic authority to consecrate to such a ministerial calling. To repeat one of our earlier quotes from Gore: 'no ministry is valid which is assumed, which a man takes upon himself, or which is merely delegated to him from below. That ministerial act alone is valid which is covered by a ministerial commission received from above by succession from the apostles'.²²⁰

Whilst I use the term 'ontological change' to describe what Gore believes ordination to bring about, there is a sense that it may be a little too clumsy to capture properly what he is trying to purvey. In using this term to describe his thinking, we need to keep in mind all that we have explored in our earlier chapter on the incarnation. There we found Christ fulfilling the human state and through his priesthood bringing humanity into a place where it can most

²¹⁸ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 61

²¹⁹ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), pp. 139 - 141; Treloar, *Lightfoot the Historian* (1998), p. 205

²²⁰ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), pp. 62 - 63

authentically live according to the image that God has implanted in it at creation. In so doing, Christ opens the way for creation to enter more fully into the life of Trinity. Gore does not consider the ordained ministerial orders of the Church to be some kind of pseudo-magical/cultic office, but understands each priest drawing their ministry directly from Christ's unique high-priesthood. It is the Spirit of this priesthood, bestowed on them at ordination, that causes a change to the internal metaphysical direction of the individual so that the ordained person becomes connected to and a part of the wider ministry of Christ, through whom salvation is found. Therefore it could be said that the 'ontological change' brought about by ordination is more accurately an individual calling fulfilled by grace.

Christ's priesthood remains unique and exemplary, with each ordained bishop, priest and deacon drawing their ministry from it and not simply looking to replicate it. So a collective 'college' of presbyters may well share in the liturgical function of the laying on of hands at ordination, but their presence serves merely to re-affirm that the Bishop is the central focus of apostolic unity under Christ, through whom the presbyters of the local assembly hold and undertake their priestly office.²²¹

Gore also outlines how, once an individual is ordained in the spirit of episcopacy, presbyterate or diaconate it cannot be taken away. Even congregational disquiet cannot remove a person from being a bishop, priest or deacon once the spirit of ordination has been received either directly from Christ (in the case of the first apostles) or from apostles themselves (in the

²²¹ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), pp. 182 - 183; Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 133

case of future bishops, priests and deacons).²²² Once the ontological change has occurred resulting from ordination, then it cannot be undone. A priest may exercise their priesthood poorly, and may even be removed from being allowed to practically exercise their ministry as a result, but at a deep metaphysical level they remain a priest nonetheless.

Because Gore considers the ministerial orders to be a 'devolution from above', the single most important qualification for each role, to Gore's mind, is an individual's spiritual, moral and prayerful credentials.²²³ Such supernatural qualifications are in every way superior to concerns regarding function, even though Gore recognises that tasks need to be attended to and 'at every stage the church is presented to us as a highly articulated body in which every member has his own position and function by divine appointment'.²²⁴ Thus, a person's effectiveness or efficiency in an associated task may not be the primary concern, since if the person is spiritually mature and is called to the role by God, then it follows that the tasks of the office will work themselves out under Christ's direction through the Spirit. This does, however, make the appointment of such persons far more difficult to discern, and in the end a combination of careful discernment at spiritual, congregational and hierarchical level is necessary to recognise an individual's calling to office.²²⁵

²²² Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 301

²²³ Charles Gore, *The Ministry of the Christian Church* (London: Rivington's, 1889), p. 145 - 147

²²⁴ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 301

²²⁵ Gore, *The Ministry of the Christian Church* (1889), p. 187

e) Concluding Thoughts

In the course of this chapter, we have seen how Gore considers that the Church is divinely instituted by Christ and Christ shows clear intentionality regarding how the Church is to develop. In his understating, it is not, as Lightfoot proclaims, created by humans in response to God's action in the world, but is God's action in the world. God works through the Church to achieve his purpose. In this way, the Church is an extension of the Incarnation, the next stage of the divine masterplan following Christ's ascension. The life it breathes is the very life of God as it remains in touch and draws from Christ's own High-Priesthood, through its ministerial orders.

Using apostolic and sub-apostolic evidence, Gore finds evidence enough to claim that following Christ's ascension, and as the Church expands, so common unity is found in the apostles' leadership, teaching and oversight. He is convinced that the very concept of a Christian at this time means nothing less than being a member of the Church; committed to the growth and flourishing of the society of believers, under the apostles' oversight. Gore recognises a certain amount of diversity within each local church helping it to adapt to local culture and need, whilst retaining unity around those things which are common to all churches: the Creed and visible Church, of which apostolic succession and threefold ministry are constitutive factors.

Gore then provides evidence for the threefold ministry, of bishops, priests and deacons, beginning its life in localised churches under an apostle's oversight. Over time, as more and more churches grow up, so the apostles begin delegating responsibility to individual bishops, who become the head of their

local college of presbyters. Then, as the apostles hand on their authority entirely, so bishops begin to be recognised as standing in their place and the threefold ministerial order grows up to be a central focus for unity itself, under the bishops' oversight. As each bishop passes down their authority to the next so the principle of apostolic succession becomes firmly rooted. All the time, Gore is keen to re-assert how this is not a human process from below being primarily driven by a task oriented approach to the society's needs, but is directed from above as Christ devolves his Spirit of priesthood. Thus, Gore sees a spiritual core to the Church's ministerial orders which supersedes all else.

Moving on from here, we have also found in this chapter how episcopal ordination provides the significant step in safeguarding and maintaining that ministerial orders are appropriately directed from above. At ordination, Christ devolves his Spirit of priesthood to each priest and deacon through the actions of the laying on of hands by each bishop, ensuring that their ministry is appropriately connected to his eternal high priesthood. In this way, Christ's priesthood remains unique and exemplary with each bishop, priest and deacon drawing their ministry from his and not simply looking to replicate it. In this way, it may be said that an ontological change takes place within each candidate so that they become spiritual instruments for Christ's redemptive qualities and salvific nature, which draws individuals through the Spirit into the Body and life of Christ.

Chapter 3: Sacramental Principles

a) Introduction and a Beginning to Sacramental Principles

In the first chapter of this dissertation, we explored one of the most prominent areas of Gore's theological thought: the incarnation. We looked at how, for Gore, the incarnation is central to the Christian faith, how Christ provides the blueprint for Christian ministry and is the foundation of the ecclesial structures of the Church. As we explored, for Gore, Christ epitomises perfect humanity and through his sacrifice sits as high priest, exemplar and head of his body, the Church. The Church and its ordained ministry looks to represent and replicate his perfect example. Jesus, earthly yet divine, reveals through his life, death and resurrection the full reality of God and the Church looks to communicate this to each new age so as to pass on the fruits of Christ's atonement.

For Gore, the incarnation offers humanity the opportunity to share in the life of God in a unique way. Waddell interprets Gore's thinking this way: 'The incarnation happened so that human beings could come to share in the relationship of the Son to the Father', and so 'Gore's Christology flows naturally into ecclesiology...'²²⁶ We will continue to track this flow from Christology to ecclesiology as we move forward in this third chapter, especially in regards to sacramental principles.

Gore asserts that 'God has given us a revelation of himself in his incarnate Son; and this revelation or disclosure of God in Christ is expressed in the

²²⁶ Waddell, *Charles Gore: Radical Anglican* (2014), p. xxvii - xxviii

threefold office of Christ as prophet, priest and king'.²²⁷ Christ, through his divine nature, reveals the richest exposition of God and so, as prophet, Christ reveals the essence of God's loving nature through words and actions. As priest, Christ offers reconciliation with God through his once-for-all-time sacrifice for sin and enables healing of the previously broken relationship. As king, exalted high-priest, robed in eternal splendour and sitting at the Father's right hand, he governs the universe, mediates for the sin that separates humanity from God and moves creation towards its eschatological conclusion.

Ramsey interprets Gore as transposing these elements directly onto the Church; itself being prophetic, priestly and kingly, on account of its incarnational attributes.²²⁸ This is because Gore considers the Church to be an 'extension of the incarnation' by making the incarnation apparent in each new age, revealing Christ's prophetic, priestly and kingly nature through its ministry of teaching, revelation and sacramental principles, which together constitute incorporation into Christ.²²⁹

In the second chapter of this project, we moved to consider how Gore interprets the development of the Church and its ministerial orders following Christ's ascension. Drawing from the textual evidence of the early church, Gore concludes that the Church is divinely instituted by Christ, who shows clear intentionality regarding how the Church is to develop. He believes that the Church is God's action in the world and God works through it to achieve his purpose.

²²⁷ Gore, *The Mission of the Church* (1892), p. 3

²²⁸ Ramsey, *An Era in Anglican Theology* (2009 [1960]), p. 112

²²⁹ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 219

Gore considers common unity within the Church to be found in the apostle's leadership, teaching and oversight. Recognising a certain amount of diversity within each local church during the apostolic and sub-apostolic eras which allows it to adapt to local culture and need, he nonetheless considers that, as the Church advances, so it retains unity around those things which are common to all churches: the Creed, apostolic succession and teaching, and the threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons.

For the Church's ministerial orders, Christ's priesthood remains unique and exemplary with each bishop, priest and deacon drawing their ministry from his and not simply looking to replicate it. In this way, Gore alludes to some kind of ontological change taking place within each candidate so that they become facilitators in the Spirit acting as instruments for Christ's redemptive work and salvific qualities which opens the way for individuals to be drawn through the Spirit into the life of Christ.

Having explored all of this in such depth, we now need to pay more attention to matters of ecclesiology; especially in regards to sacramental principles. In the chapter on the incarnation, we discovered how the Spirit infused the life of Christ within each individual believer. Then, in the chapter on the evidence of history, we discovered how the ordained priesthood might facilitate this by themselves acting as instruments for Christ's redemptive work so that individuals may be drawn through the Spirit into the life of Christ. As we move through this chapter we shall look more deeply at how the Spirit draws us into the dispersed life of Christ present within the sacred community: the corporate Body of Christ. We will see how it does this by means of forming a certain kind of communal life, by ordering that life and through its sacramental principles.

In Gore's understanding, these are the ways the Spirit unites us to Christ. The Church is the result, revealing Christ through its communal life, priestly function and authentic Christ-given ministerial orders and sacraments. This is the means by which humanity may enter into the divine life of the Trinity. It is this sharing in the divine life that constitutes the Church. Waddell paraphrases Gore this way: 'Jesus lived and died to share his life, to bring our lives within his. That incorporation, that communion of transformed lives in Christ... we call the Church. It happens supremely through the sacraments: through bodily, social rituals in which God reaches out to claim our bodily and social life'.²³⁰

As we move through this chapter we will be able to discern quite a lot about Gore's understanding of the ordained priesthood and the Church's ecclesiological ordering. We will discuss what Gore considers are the differences between the priesthood of all baptised believers and those God calls to a special ministry as ordained priests. We will see how this ministerial priesthood is not some kind of elite caste, but instead how priests are to gather the worshipping community and direct the Church's action so that it relates to God's action, through teaching and sacramental functions. Along with Gore's understanding that Christology informs ecclesiology, we will also discover how Gore understands Christ to have ordained his Church and its priesthood for the eternal good of creation.

This naturally raises many questions regarding what Gore's understanding of the Church and its ministerial priesthood is. How and why does the Spirit, catching us up into Christ's prophetic, priestly, and kingly work, take the form

²³⁰ Waddell, *Charles Gore: Radical Anglican* (2014), p. xxviii

of the Church's ministry? It is clear from the outset that sacramental actions play a large part in this, for Gore. We must ask, however, how and why, exactly, does the work of the Spirit involve giving the Church sacramental actions to perform?

These are complex questions. We may have partly answered them in previous chapters, but we have by no means done that adequately. I hope we will find some further resolution to them in this chapter. In order to begin unravelling an answer we will begin by contemplating how Gore contributes to our understanding of the Church's nature and purpose.

b) The Church's Nature and Purpose

Drawing upon biblical and patristic material, Gore is in no doubt that Christ instituted a society to continue his work after his resurrection. That society is the Church and Gore's confidence in the validity of the Church stems from this point.²³¹ Whilst he believes this society was intended to become 'perpetual'²³², it is, he believes, also a 'society simple enough in its principles to be capable of adaptation to the varying needs of ages and nations and individuals...' ²³³ To his way of thinking, the Church has an abiding structure that enables its continual participation in the life of the Spirit, whilst being adaptable enough to make room for the necessary change and development of each new age.

Nonetheless, despite his openness to the Church embracing the advances in 'contemporary critical thought'²³⁴ that come with each new era, Gore also

²³¹ See Gore, *The Philosophy of the Good life* (1935 [1930]), pp. 172 - 177

²³² Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 59

²³³ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 10

²³⁴ Carpenter, *Gore: A Study in Liberal Catholic Thought*, (1960), p. 35

retains a certain conservatism in regards to central dogmatic facets, believing certain church practices and teachings to be consistent with Christ's teachings and thus not open to such adaptation; certainly not to be relegated to history in an attempt to 'engage' with new emerging culture. For Gore, the Church only remains valid through apostolic succession and by authentically passing down its traditions from age to age²³⁵ according to its sociological and intellectual situation. In the clearest statement he seems to give us on the subject, he states: 'The unchanging tradition goes hand in hand with the steadfast ministerial succession'.²³⁶

In the last chapter we explored at length Gore's historical justification for the threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons. Here, we once again note that Gore sees biblical texts, authorised creedal formulas, apostolic succession, ministerial orders and sacramental principles remaining consistent in their authority over time. Beyond this, he does not prescribe just how much the Church should 'bend' to the pressure of surrounding culture in order to engage with a changing context. Some commentators, such as Waddell and Carpenter, suggest that this is an example of inconsistency in Gore's thought.²³⁷ Is Gore inconsistent in the way he discusses flexibility and uniformity within the Church?

On the face of it there does appear to be inconsistency prevalent here. Gore never really nails his colours to the mast over what may advance or adapt

²³⁵ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), pp. 63 - 69

²³⁶ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 108

²³⁷ Waddell, *Charles Gore: Radical Anglican* (2014), pp. xxx - xxxiv; Carpenter: *Gore: A Study in Liberal Catholic Thought*, (1960), pp. 38 - 41. Carpenter suggests that as Gore's responsibilities increased to become a bishop, so his views developed along more conservative and dogmatic lines.

without damaging the inheritance he is so determined that the Church must pass on. In some aspects he appears terribly dogmatic and yet in others radically liberal.²³⁸ We must remember, however, that we view Gore's thinking with the benefit of hindsight from a very different theological and cultural context. There is one other significant point that we must also consider and is pertinent for our wider deliberations in this dissertation.

For Gore, to have posed the question regarding flexibility and uniformity in the way we have (and the way Waddell and Carpenter have fallen into the trap of doing) is to have misinterpreted completely the nature of the Church as Gore depicts it. Drawing upon what we discovered in the earlier section, we saw how Gore considers the Church as the community being brought through the Spirit into relationship with the Trinity. As such, it cannot abandon any practice or form of order that is required for that purpose, or else it simply ceases to be the Church. For Gore, such structures and practices include biblical texts, authorised creedal formulas, apostolic succession, ministerial orders and sacramental principles. The Church can, however, adapt where this may be in keeping with the Spirit's guidance, and can certainly change anything that is not essential and conducive to the Spirit's ambitions. This does not make deciding what may or may not change very easy, but so long as these primary principles are followed, it does make for a church that remains true to its overall purpose, guided by the Spirit into relationship with God, which is of course Gore's main concern.

²³⁸ See Carpenter, *Gore: A Study in Liberal Catholic Thought*, (1960), pp. 34 - 36

All the same, faced with the expanding secular understanding of the world, Gore is concerned that the Church must work all the harder at teaching its timeless principles in ways that embrace the fresh insights of any new era by using such insights to re-communicate ancient truths, whilst not undermining them. So revealing a vigour to match such advances, Gore worked tirelessly throughout his life to expound the Church's understanding of its longstanding, and to his mind, consistent God-given tradition and dogmas. As was evident in the *Lux Mundi* debates, Gore was willing to push boundaries to encourage fresh thinking. At the same time, however, he retained a concern to protect core values and teachings and this particular concern only seemed to advance in him with age.²³⁹

So then, the first point in Gore's thinking that we need to note here is a concern for the Church to authentically preserve what Christ instituted; in word, ritual and orders, together with a tension for the Church to respond to advances in understanding that accompany the cultural development of each new era. Gore believes that the Church is called to reflect the love that we see in Christ to the world, because Christ shows humanity the route into relationship with the divine. Gore observes that what we see in the incarnate Son is perfect love: Christ, through his life, actions and words, communicates the reality of God most dependably. Therefore, the most perfect reflection or representation of God is only evident in and through what Christ instituted.

In the Chapter on the Incarnation we discovered how Christ in his high priesthood was the blue-print for all Christian ministry. Gore identifies three

²³⁹ See: Waddell, *Charles Gore: Radical Anglican* (2014), pp. xxx – xxxiv & Carpenter, *Gore: A Study in Liberal Catholic Thought*, (1960), pp. 38 - 41.

main characteristics to this – Christ as prophet, priest and king. Gore understands relationship with God to hinge on at least three principal points – witness/revelation, participation and obedience. These appear to map on to Christ as prophet, priest and king in Gore's thinking. As prophet he witnesses to God's action in the world and reveals it to the human race. As priest he encourages humanity's participation within it. As king he leads people to obedience to the will of God. Using Christ as its example, the Church's function is to authentically teach, encourage and enable these in each new age in order to draw individuals into the work of the Spirit and the life of the Trinity.

Advancing this pattern of thought, we see Gore drawing upon the thinking of his fellow *Lux Mundi* co-contributor Moberly, who proposed that the Church represents a perfect inward reality, albeit whilst often lacking outward perfection.²⁴⁰ In Moberly's thinking, the perfect inward reality represented by the Church is God and his revelation of himself in the person of Jesus Christ. The 'outward' and imperfect reflection of the divine, in Moberly's understanding, is the Church and its ordering and function. Whilst Gore appears loosely content with Moberly's depiction, he is confident that the 'outward' Church is more than just a pale reflection of the true and perfect reality that is God: for him, the Church represents Christ and it works within the structures Christ instituted. Gore states, 'To the true and typical Churchman...all the ecclesiastical fabric only represents an unseen but present Lord'.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Moberly, *Ministerial Priesthood* (1899), pp. 2 - 7

²⁴¹ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 2

Be this as it may, at the present time the Church is not yet all that it is called to be and Gore is only too ready to accept that the Church throughout history has often made mistakes, and continues to do so. Theologising this, Gore states:

...we believe that the imperfections in the Church do not prevent her true function and that our reverence for her is not as our reverence for Christ; it is our reverence for the Bride of Christ, not yet purified – for the organ of the Holy Spirit, not yet perfect. The Church exists not yet to exhibit her glory, save to the eye of faith'.²⁴²

Here we see Gore keeping his attention on the true function of the Church: its relation to Christ. This is what enables him to talk about continuity and change, and about imperfection and perfection. The Church aspires towards perfection by carefully preserving what Christ instituted, and this perfection is something hoped and prayed for. 'As for the vision of the Church in her perfection of unity and truth and holiness', Gore explains, '...it is the vision of heaven but the hope of earth – we shall see it, but not now, we shall behold it, but not nigh.'²⁴³

This has moved us neatly on to another relevant aspect of Gore's thinking: a belief that the Church and the ordained priesthood is involved in actively and authentically revealing and implanting Christ's love into the world and that through this love creation is heading towards consummation in Christ. The work of Christ, into which the body of the Church is incorporated, is for the good of creation; ultimately towards the consummation of God's creative work.

²⁴² Gore, *Roman Catholic Claims* (1889), p. 174

²⁴³ Gore, *Roman Catholic Claims* (1889), p. 174

Gore emphasises that Christ instituted his Church and that through the Spirit, its orders, central teaching and many of its rituals it must resist inappropriate corruption from other agendas if it is to faithfully communicate Christ's love to the world. Recognising that individualism and experientialism can so easily cause the promptings of the Spirit to be confused with personal or collective whim, Gore offers a small warning and safeguard. It is a warning that has a high level of significance for the individual priest. Gore considers that the Spirit reveals the 'truth' and breathes life into the Church. He insists that the life of the Spirit is not something entirely new, unseen or unknown, for the life the Spirit breathes is the very life of Jesus himself – the life seen most authentically in and through the Incarnation.²⁴⁴ He says, 'The Spirit is the life-giver, but the life with which he works is the life of the Incarnate, the life of Jesus'.²⁴⁵ The work of the Spirit, therefore, is, and will be, entirely consistent with the orders, teaching and ritual instituted by Christ.²⁴⁶ In pointing this out, Gore offers a warning to those with a low regard for inherited ministerial orders, teachings and sacramental principles.

Added to this, through the invigoration of the Spirit, the Church communicates God's love. It does not just communicate that love exists, nor that love is 'something in God', but also that love is the 'motive of creation', and that 'the realization of the purpose of love', heaven, is the Church's certain goal.²⁴⁷ Under God's guidance, the priesthood must be mindful to communicate authentically this eschatological and eternal love to the temporal world. As we

²⁴⁴ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 218

²⁴⁵ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 218

²⁴⁶ We explored Gore's thoughts on the authenticity and necessity of the orders of bishop, priest and deacon in the last chapter.

²⁴⁷ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 119

shall discover shortly, the Church's sacramental principle is central to this exchange.

For Gore, the Old Testament represents the 'first volume' of the divine revelation; the incarnation represents the 'second volume'. The 'third volume', is still unrealised, but will contain 'revelation of the glory, the far off divine event to which all creation moves'.²⁴⁸ It is this that the Church, through its ministerial orders, is called by God to look towards and prepare creation to embrace. This is seen most authentically in and through the person of Jesus Christ. Christ's self-sacrifice enables us to peer to heaven. And so in the present, the Church is at once looking back to what Thornton later deemed as 'the supreme sacrifice of Christ';²⁴⁹ whilst also perceiving with Christ at its head, the future eschatological conclusion.

We seem to have covered a lot of complex ground in a short space of time, so let us now draw together some of what we have just discovered before moving on. So far in this chapter we have seen how Gore understands the Church (and its ministerial orders) as having a responsibility for authentically preserving what Christ instituted and passing it on to each new generation in appropriate manner. This is because in Christ we see the most perfect way of entering into relationship with God. Christ stands in his high-priesthood as prophet, priest and king and as such re-establishes the means of relationship with God through witness/revelation, participation and (individual and corporate) obedience. The Church communicates and encourages this through its teachings, actions and rituals so that Christian life corresponds with

²⁴⁸ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 53

²⁴⁹ Thornton, *The Common life in the Body of Christ* (1950 [1942]), p. 23

the prophetic, priestly, kingly work of Christ. Gore thus believes that teachings, actions and rituals, authentically delivered, are on some level the most reliable representation of God after the incarnation. Each refers back to the incarnational example, and their authenticity rests in the actions and instructions of Christ himself.

The Church, according to Gore, is called to proclaim Christ's love to the world, whilst the Spirit invigorates the Church with the life of Christ. This life is entirely consistent with the Church's authentic function through which the Spirit has consistently been active and points towards the eschatological conclusion of creation. As we move forward, we will see how all of this is grounded in material and communal characteristics through the sacraments.

For the priesthood, this is reflected in their actions, after the example of Christ and on behalf of the Church Body. We will, therefore, now move our exploration on by looking at the sacramental imperative of the priesthood.

c) The Personal, the Corporate and the Eternal

Having explored something of Gore's understanding of the Church's nature and purpose, we are now going to look into the detail of how Gore deepens that understanding, sometimes controversially so. For Gore, much of what we have just discussed is reflected in what the priesthood is and does and as we look at the sacraments in more depth, we discover that they are not only important, but a central part of the life of the Church and the role of the priesthood.

The overtly social and physical characteristics of the sacraments, as Waddell states, 'say something important about God's method and purpose',²⁵⁰ and they also reveal to us the central place of social concern in the priest's role. For Gore, it is telling that God has chosen to reveal these realities through rituals and not just words. God has chosen to engage with humanity through material substance. Christ, the divine word, came as a living, breathing, walking, talking piece of physical matter; human in form. By God's grace, the Church similarly continues to bestow his blessings on creation through the sacraments in everyday physical material; through water, bread, wine, oil, hands... For Gore, the necessity for this lies in our created nature. He states, 'The production on this earth of a human soul or personality, with all its tremendous and eternal possibilities, is by God's creative will indisputably attached to material conditions.'²⁵¹ Sacraments properly feed the soul precisely because they combine the spiritual with the material.

Here, we get a glimpse of Gore's theological anthropology. His understanding of ordained priesthood and the sacraments is fed by his perception of what humanity is. Gore believes humanity to be of both material and spiritual capacity, but whose spiritual capacity has fallen by its slavery to sin.²⁵² The incarnation offers a return to that spiritual nature through a restoration of relationship with God, and in like manner a return to a more holistic existence. Through the sacraments, the Church and priesthood reveal the incarnation and open up the possibility for humanity to live accordingly.

²⁵⁰ Waddell, *Charles Gore: Radical Anglican* (2014), p. 60

²⁵¹ Gore, *The Body of Christ* (1901), pp. 37

²⁵² Gore, "On the Christian Doctrine of Sin," in *Lux Mundi* (London: John Murray, 1902 [1889]), p. 392.

And so, the sacraments are central to Gore's theological understanding of the priesthood and the Church, and his sacramental theology reveals three main characteristics that link Christology to Ecclesiology. Firstly, through the incarnation, sacraments make possible our communal sharing in the divine life. They ritually re-member and re-enact significant moments of divine encounter and re-engage the community into the divine life by retelling and recognising God's interaction with creation. Second, they enable our incorporation into Christ, and this incorporation constitutes the Church (the Body of Christ). Through the imparting of the distinctive sacramental grace associated with each sacrament, the receiver becomes one with Christ, united with his Spirit. Third, they gaze forward to the eternal Christ as the Church's consummation, whilst at the same time looking back to the incarnate Christ as the Church's foundation and implant the historical and eternal Christ into the present through the sacrament's physical attributes.

The sacraments' physical characteristics combined with their indwelling in the person and historicity of Jesus Christ give sacramental acts their full spiritual substance through a continuity of what Christ instated: faithfulness to his teaching and making it present to the world. Through sacramental enactment the past is made present and the gathered body is united with eternity through Christ who ever reigns in heaven.

As we discovered in the last chapter, Gore understands the ordained priesthood as historically valid and he also believes that it is theologically essential in the midst of this because the priesthood is an important component called to authenticity and outward action in the Spirit. Gore understands that a priest receives the sacrament of holy orders through the

laying on of hands. As such, they stand in a line from the first Apostles as chosen by the Spirit to share in the one priesthood of Christ. By virtue of their office, only priests and bishops may perform certain 'Christ-like' functions and in so doing they draw other individuals into the body by their actions to be touched by the grace of God. For Gore, historical authenticity is an especially important facet not to be overlooked, because for a present sacramental action to remain valid it must retain those principles that Christ inaugurated.

A closer investigation reveals that Gore's sacramental theology seems to operate on three co-dependent spheres, *the personal*, *the corporate* and *the eternal*, and the way he talks about individual sacraments independently of one another seems to reaffirm this.

For example: if we look at Gore's ponderings on baptism, we discover how through the baptismal prayer and action, the historical narrative becomes present reality. In baptism, a person is united with Christ in his historical baptism (*the personal*), but also enters into the ever living Christ by membership of his Church (the corporate) and under the eternal Christ as he sits as the head of the society (*the eternal*).²⁵³ Once again, there is an obvious mapping on to Christ as prophet, priest and king.

Alongside this, the communal and social aspect of the sacrament is vitally important. For this reason, Gore feels that what he calls 'popular Protestantism' is to be completely rejected.²⁵⁴ He refutes what he regards as the individualistic approach that sees baptism and other sacraments as primarily 'an allegiance of the individual soul to Christ...' where all other

²⁵³ Gore, *The Reconstruction of Belief* (1926), p. 745

²⁵⁴ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), p. 40

allegiance to earthly organisation is simply a matter of personal taste or preference.²⁵⁵ For Gore, such thinking is in 'glaring discrepancy to the New Testament'.²⁵⁶ Gore considers the scriptural evidence to be unequivocal in demanding that an individual's 'baptism into Christ is also baptism into the one body'.²⁵⁷ Elsewhere he continues: 'Thus our new birth into Christ is attached to a washing of water. This is the 'bath of regeneration', the being 'baptised into Christ'. But it is also our introduction into society; 'by the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body''.²⁵⁸

If we peruse Gore's thoughts on Confirmation, we see a similar understanding and concern being followed to identify the personal, corporate and eternal. Gore says:

Our Confirmation, or unction by the Holy Ghost, which is the completion of our baptism, is attached to the laying on of hands of the chief pastor of the society; and while it is the enriching of our personal life, it is also our investiture with a kingship and priesthood, which imply the full privileges and obligations of membership in the society.²⁵⁹

Similarly, if we consider these three elements in relation to the sacrament of Confession (or Reconciliation of a Penitent), we see the same logic follows through. This sacrament sees the individual at once personally feeling the restorative healing grace of the Holy Spirit (*the personal*), whilst also being reconciled back into the community of believers (*the corporate*) and to the eternal worshipful body of heaven with Christ at its head (*the eternal*). Equally,

²⁵⁵ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), p. 40

²⁵⁶ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), p. 40

²⁵⁷ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), p. 40

²⁵⁸ Gore, *The Body of Christ* (1901), pp. 40 - 42

²⁵⁹ Gore, *The Body of Christ* (1901), pp. 40 - 42

if one were to consider Ordination, Marriage and Divine Unction (the Sacrament of Healing), we see that similar attributes are equally recognisable within them. Each sacrament through its individual, corporate and eternal elements restores the individual into the life of the Trinity. Each sacrament therefore concerns itself with the needs of the personal, corporate and eternal longings of the soul.

All of this is also certainly true of the Eucharist, and as we move through an exploration of the Eucharist, we will find that it has far reaching consequences for Gore's understanding of ordained priesthood.

d) The Eucharist

Gore wrote more about the Eucharist than any other sacrament.²⁶⁰ Beyond the theological elements Gore draws out above, he believes that the Eucharist contains one other significant characteristic: its association to Christ's sacrifice. Pondering this, Gore says; Christ 'through eternal Spirit offered himself without spot. In the Eucharist, what gives its meaning to the rite is his eternal offering of himself present among us. Whatever we offer at the Altar gains its acceptance through its relation to his sacrifice'.²⁶¹ Gore uses the patristic legacy to justify his stance:

But before communion, through the consecrating action of the Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine, of which these Fathers²⁶² speak with such rapt devotion, Christ's body and His blood become present, and Christ Himself is there, our

²⁶⁰ Waddell explores this at length in: Waddell, *Charles Gore: Radical Anglican* (2014), pp. 64 - 65

²⁶¹ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), p. 165

²⁶² Ss. Cyril, Chrysostom, Augustine

high priest, our king, and our sacrifice, in the midst of the worshipping church.²⁶³

Gore sees, through re-membrance and communal participation, Christ's eternal sacrifice being made present before reception in the offering of the bread and wine through the involvement of the Holy Spirit. For Gore, Christ's words recalled by St Paul in his letter to the Church at Corinth to 'do this in remembrance of me',²⁶⁴ are a call to more than just a mental recollection. Gore's understanding could no doubt be considered closely aligned to that of Leenhardt's later consideration that 'remembrance' is being used in this context to refer to 'the restoration of a past event. To remember is to make present and actual'.²⁶⁵ And so it is that for Gore the Eucharist is a representation, a memorial meal, a commemoration all rolled into one, and much more besides. Gore visualises the Eucharist transcending the limits of earthly time and space as each offering unites with Christ's prophetic, priestly and kingly action, and exists simultaneously past, present and future. Sharing in Christ's priesthood, the ordained priest stands as the intermediary helping the wider body to participate in these eternal realities. As bread and wine are placed on the Altar, so Christ transforms them and unites them with his eternal sacrifice, making present his atoning reality.

As is immediately apparent here, Gore quickly moves beyond simply claiming that the Eucharist is 'connected' to Christ's sacrifice through this re-

²⁶³ Gore, *The Body of Christ* (1901), pp. 87 - 88

²⁶⁴ 1 Cor. 11: 24

²⁶⁵ Franz. J. Leenhardt, 'The Lord's Supper as a Sacrifice'. In J. Davies & A. George (eds.), *Essays on the Lord's Supper* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1958), p.61. See also J. Charley, *The Anglo-Roman Catholic Agreement on the Eucharist* (Bramcote: Grove Books, 1972), p. 11

membrance, to the notion that the Eucharist itself is a sacrifice. This is important to Gore because through the Eucharist he considers the Church participating most fully in Christ's redeeming work, whilst also offering continuity with God's revelation throughout time. He sees the Church, through the ordained priesthood and the Eucharist, uniting itself through Christ with the whole of salvation history and the most primitive and authentic model of both sacrifice and priesthood: the offering of bread and wine as seen in the example of Melchizedek.²⁶⁶

To suggest that the Eucharist is a sacrifice, however, was no less controversial in Gore's time than it may be in some quarters today. As Waddell reminds us, the relation of the Eucharist to sacrifice has been a terribly controversial issue for many centuries'.²⁶⁷ Recognising this chequered history and the likely challenges that would come his way in response to this claim, Gore justifies his assertion by demonstrating three further characteristics that, to his mind, make it thus.

First, it is a sacrifice because of the actions and aspirations of the gathering body of believers. He says:

First of all, the eucharist is a sacrifice because in the Christian church – the great priestly body, and “soul of the world” – exercises her privilege of Sonship in free approach to the Father in the name of Christ. She comes before the Father with her material offerings of bread and wine, and of those things wherein God has prospered her, bearing witness that all good things come from Him; and though He needs nothing from man, yet He accepts the

²⁶⁶ Gore, *The Body of Christ* (1901), pp. 256 - 260; See Genesis 14: 18 - 20; Hebrews 7: 1 - 28

²⁶⁷ See Waddell, *Charles Gore: Radical Anglican* (2014), p. 73

recognition of His Fatherhood from loyal and free hearts. She comes with her wide-spreading intercessions for the whole race, and for her members living and departed. She offers her glad sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for all the blessings of creation and redemption. She solemnly commemorates the passion in word and in symbolic action, through the bread broken and the wine outpoured, the appointed tokens of Christ's sacrificial body and blood, reciting before God His own words and acts in instituting the holy eucharist. This is the church's sacrifice, and it is all she can do.²⁶⁸

The nature of the Church, as Gore considers it, is a participation in the incarnate life of Christ. This is why he refers to the Church as an 'extension of the Incarnation'.²⁶⁹ His account of Eucharistic sacrifice makes sense in this context. In fact, he views all the sacraments contributing to the life of Christ being made present by the Spirit in the Church body, individually and corporately, through the sacramental grace which they contain.

Gore sees in the Eucharistic offering an intent, a purpose and a unifying of diverse individuals into one body through their shared objective and focus. And yet, it is also much more than this, because it is also a taking-part-in God's offering of himself within the Trinity. Christ makes it possible that a fitting sacrificial offering of bread and wine may be acceptable for us to be brought back into relation with God. The Eucharist is a joint enterprise of devotion, giving thanks for the actions of God through Christ, accepting the sinfulness of human nature and seeking corporate repentance and absolution for it, and bringing the pain of the world to the altar for healing. In the unity of prayer, the

²⁶⁸ Gore, *The Body of Christ* (1901), pp. 210 - 211

²⁶⁹ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 219

people of God offer a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and Christ meets them in their offering from his heavenly seat.

Second, Gore sees eternal connotations providing the next factor suggesting the Eucharist is a sacrifice; namely God's involvement in uniting the 'Body's' earthly sacrifice of the Eucharist with the eternal sacrifice of Christ reigning in his heavenly realm:

...Now the eucharist is a sacrifice in a second and deeper sense, for God has united the offerings of the church to the ever-living sacrifice of the great high priest in the heavenly sanctuary, or has given His presence among them who is their propitiation and their spiritual food.²⁷⁰

Williams no doubt had this concept in mind when, many years later, he asserted that 'this is evidently the vocabulary underlying Rom. 12:1 [and other similar passages]. Christians offer what the Angels offer "the pleasing savour of a rational and bloodless sacrifice".²⁷¹ For both Gore and Williams, it is the association between the temporal sacrifice of the body and eternal sacrifice of heaven that grants access to the heavenly priesthood and eternal intercession of Christ: his eternal petition on our behalf.²⁷² The Eucharist recalls and makes present the paradox of past eternal realities concerning God and his action in the world, and fleetingly gazes upon eschatological events which incorporate all creation into a culmination of eternal heavenly feasting and devotion – bringing these also into the present. It makes real and present Christ's atoning sacrifice and enables believers to fleetingly engage in the eternal worship of

²⁷⁰ Gore, *The Body of Christ* (1901), p. 212

²⁷¹ Rowan Williams, *Eucharistic Sacrifice: The Roots of a Metaphor* (Bramcote: Grove Books, 1982), p. 13

²⁷² Gore, *The Body of Christ* (1901), p. 212 & Williams, *Eucharistic Sacrifice* (1982), p. 13

heaven, giving them a foretaste of the heavenly banquet: the eternal worship for which all creation longs. The Church offers bread and wine as participation in the event of God's self-giving to himself, a one-off historical event eternally valid and perpetual. As Aulèn describes so aptly: 'The past is here, too, the present, as the Lord himself makes the past and eternally valid contemporaneous with us'.²⁷³

Any sacrifice may only be considered valid once God accepts the offering and brings it to culmination through his interactive and reconciliatory nature. And so, for Gore, the third and final consideration moves seamlessly on from the other two; that in the Eucharist, God having accepted the body's offering brings it to culmination by uniting the entire body to himself through the indwelling of the same Spirit:

Then once more, united afresh in one body to God by the communion in Christ's body and blood, the church offers herself, one with Christ as a body with its head, living in the same life and indwelt by the same spirit: she offers herself that her whole fellowship, both the living and the dead, having their sins forgiven through the propitiation of Christ, may be accepted with all their good works and prayers "in the beloved." And in the self-oblation of the church is the culmination of the sacrifice.²⁷⁴

The Church's offering is only made possible by its encounter with the Trinitarian life through the Spirit. The Eucharist makes real something of this divine-earthly encounter. The Spirit abides in the Church in a similar way that it indwells Christ's historical body. Gore is keen to impress, however, that the

²⁷³ Gustaf Aulèn, *Eucharist and Sacrifice*, E. Wahlstrom (trans.) (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1956), p. 192

²⁷⁴ Gore, *The Body of Christ* (1901), pp. 212 - 213

individual priest does not by virtue of his or her status personally receive special 'powers' through this association; the sacred mystery of the sacraments are purely the result of Christ's actions alone. This is all a part of the Church body's participation in Christ and entering into the life of the Spirit. By way of clarification, Gore tells us that 'the Church nor the priesthood are in and of themselves capable of bestowing supernatural power except for that which institutes and seeds them with Spirit and Grace – Christ'.²⁷⁵ He continues: 'The priesthood then makes present that supernatural grace through interpretation and sacramental actions, they do not themselves possess supernatural 'power', but through their calling to ordination by God they receive the authority to enact supernatural functions in order to reveal the grace of God in the temporal'.²⁷⁶ And so Gore, is keen to impress that whilst the ordained priesthood may well be called by God to receive authority to enact supernatural functions through the sacraments that reveal God's action in the world, and just because we are united with Christ's sacrifice through the Eucharist, it in no way makes the ordained ministry a 'cultic' priesthood by merit of such a calling. He adds:

The sacrifice is the sacrifice of the whole body, and the communion is the communion of the whole body. The celebrating priest is indeed the necessary organ of the body's action. ²⁷⁷He is the mouth with which she prays, and the

²⁷⁵ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), pp. 7 - 8

²⁷⁶ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), pp. 7 - 8

²⁷⁷ I would just like to remind the reader at this point that, together with a whole plethora of English writing from Gore's era, Gore follows the standard custom of his time in using male gender specific language as though it were gender neutral. Of course, the historical, theological and sociological situation also saw ordination restricted to men. This is reflected in Gore's use of terminology. In order to retain the authenticity of his writings, I have not sought to correct this when using quotations from Gore's work, but I would argue that his conclusions about priesthood transcend limitations of gender.

hand by which she offers and blesses in the name of Christ. But the sacrifice is the Church's Sacrifice...²⁷⁸

At this point, Gore once again underpins his argument with evidence taken from patristic literature. Gore says: 'The utmost that God can give – the very being of His own Son – is given to all alike to bind them in one divine and human life. "Sometimes" says St Chrysostom, "there is no difference between priests and people; for example, when we partake of the awful mysteries"'.²⁷⁹

Gore believes that the Eucharist, along with all the sacraments, are not privileges of an elite priestly caste. Neither are they done by priests 'to' their receivers. The priesthood is not given a special channel to God that everyone else is barred from. Neither does the priesthood police such gateways. Priests are simply set apart by the Spirit at ordination to ensure that the Church's action continues to relate authentically to God's action through not just words, but also sacramental functions, which are based in material and earthly things. They are committed to the giving of 'God's holy gifts for God's holy people'.²⁸⁰ This gives us a brief insight into what Gore considers differentiates the 'ordained priesthood' from the 'priesthood of all believers'. We will now turn to explore this in a little more depth.

e) The Ordained Priesthood and the Priesthood of All Believers

For many decades, there have been prevalent and ongoing debates concerned with differentiating between the nature of baptismal priesthood over

²⁷⁸ Gore, *The Body of Christ* (1901), p. 213

²⁷⁹ Gore, *The Body of Christ* (1901), pp. 213 - 214

²⁸⁰ The Archbishop's Council, *Common Worship: Order One*, (London: Archbishop's Council, 2002)

and against that of ordained ministry. These debates were significant for the contributions of the Second Vatican Council, but the council's outcomes did not bring an end to such deliberations. Even in the twenty-first century there is still a concern to try and clarify what exactly it means to be baptised into a priesthood of all believers²⁸¹ in a church that also recognises individuals to a special ministry of ordained priesthood. As Risley states: 'one of the more vexing problems that faces the Church today is the relationship between the priesthood of those who are ordained and the baptismal priesthood of all the faithful'.²⁸²

Although Gore is writing at a time in history before the major debates over the nature of the baptismal priesthood had reached their climax,²⁸³ it is interesting to observe the attention Gore gives to this area of his theological thought. Gore is only too aware of the dangers associated with holding a theology of ordained ministry that diminishes the role of the wider body of believers in the Church's redemptive and salvific task under Christ. In a significant statement, Gore says: 'It will appear that there are in the Church (those) who are in a special sense entrusted with 'the ministry of reconciliation' just as there are in a special sense prophets and teachers. But this special office must not be allowed to interfere with the truth that the whole body is priestly – a royal priesthood...'²⁸⁴

²⁸¹ Also referred to in this dissertation as the baptismal priesthood.

²⁸² Jack Risley, 'The Minister: Lay and Ordained'. In Donald Goergen & Ann Garrido (eds.), *The Theology of Priesthood* (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2000), p. 119

²⁸³ Debates within the Church over the nature of the baptismal priesthood have been ongoing at some level ever since the letters of St Paul, but came into sharp focus in the middle of the twentieth century in response to concern over the Church's declining influence in society. This debate was epitomised in the discussions and outcomes of the 2nd Vatican Council.

²⁸⁴ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), p. 64

In light of this statement, one may well puzzle over what it means to be called to ordained ministry. How is the ordained priesthood different from the one received at baptism?²⁸⁵ In order to answer this conundrum, we will need to look at each in turn.

i. Baptism and the 'Priesthood of All Believers'

Gore is convinced that the baptism of new believers was expressly instituted by Christ and is recorded as such in the Gospels.²⁸⁶ He is also keen to remind his readers that baptism is regarded in the New Testament as the instrument of the forgiveness of sins and incorporation into the community, and was accompanied or followed by the gift of the Spirit'.²⁸⁷ For Gore, baptism carries both symbolic and effectual meaning. He states: 'going down into the water and being immersed in it and rising out of it is an acted representation of life through death, the dying to an old life and being buried and rising again to the new life.'²⁸⁸ So baptism, according to Gore, symbolises a change in direction in one's personal and spiritual life: it symbolises a person recognising their previous alienation from God and from that moment beginning to live a life more in tune with God's wishes. It is also much more than that, because as

²⁸⁵ Ashley is concerned to explore these questions in some depth in: Benedict Ashley, 'The Priesthood of Christ, the Baptised and the Ordained'. In Goergen & Garrido (eds.), *The Theology of Priesthood* (2000), p. 139

²⁸⁶ Gore, *The Reconstruction of Belief* (1926), pp. 673 - 674. In these pages, Gore discusses the difficulties caused by uncertainty concerning authenticity of authorship of the texts in question, especially the ending to Mark's Gospel. He notes that one is always left using, what he calls, 'conjecture' in such circumstances. His sensitive academic mind also leaves him feeling uncomfortable with the tendency to have to use individual passages to justify a given position. He does, however, relate all this to the earlier evidence of John the Baptist's actions and the evidence of the Early Church found in Acts and St Paul's letters to conclude that the evidence found in the final chapter of Mark's Gospel relating to sending out the Apostles to 'Baptise in the name of...', and in John's Gospel relating to the 'future instrument of the new birth' does fit accordingly into the tradition of the early Church's testimony about Jesus.

²⁸⁷ Gore, *The Reconstruction of Belief* (1926), p. 673

²⁸⁸ Gore, *The Reconstruction of Belief* (1926), p. 745

Gore continues: baptism 'effects what it symbolises. It is the transference of a man into a new spiritual sphere'.²⁸⁹ Following St Paul's teaching that one is baptized 'into Christ',²⁹⁰ and 'as many of you as were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ',²⁹¹ Gore understands that Christ, through the rite itself, brings about the effectual change it symbolises by the bestowal of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is a coming to Christ, a beginning to live a life in Christ, through his Spirit.²⁹²

Gore is keen to impress, however, that this is not simply a calling of a lone individual to relationship with a personal Jesus, as important an element of faith as that may be. Ramsey states that: 'Christianity is never solitary'. Gore is in complete agreement. For him, baptism 'into Christ is also baptism into the one body'.²⁹³ According to Gore, the individual aspect of faith cannot be distinguished from their incorporation into the society that Christ inaugurated.²⁹⁴ He believes that baptism is entering into the community of the Church - eternal and temporal. To be united with Christ is to be united with his eternal body in the heavenly realm and his earthly body, the Church, which he inhabits through his Spirit. An individual does not first unite with Christ and then join other members of a gathered group of likeminded individuals, which

²⁸⁹ Gore, *The Reconstruction of Belief* (1926), p. 745

²⁹⁰ Romans 6: 3

²⁹¹ Galatians 3: 27 - 28.

²⁹² Gore, *The Reconstruction of Belief* (1926), p. 745. Gore continues on to highlight that there is a complication to our argument when considering the practice of today's Church because the bestowal of the Spirit by the laying on of hands has been separated out from baptismal cleansing to form the separate sacrament of confirmation.²⁹² This poses a question regarding when a believer may be considered to have entered fully into the 'baptismal priesthood'? For Gore, the answer seems to be adulthood, in so much as any believer baptised as a child and reaching adulthood in the Church may be expected to have been confirmed and any adult being baptised may be expected to be confirmed at the same time. See Gore, *The Reconstruction of Belief* (1926), p. 752; Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 77

²⁹³ Romans 6:3; 1 Corinthians 10:12-13; Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), p. 40

²⁹⁴ Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* (1956 [1936]), p. 36

we call a church. Instead, an individual is baptised into the Church where they encounter the living Christ. Gore states, 'Thus our new birth into Christ is attached to a washing of water. This is the "bath of regeneration", the being "baptised into Christ". But it is also our introduction into society, "by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body."' ²⁹⁵

As we discovered in an earlier chapter, Gore's deep seated incarnational theology is significant in his understanding of the Church, and it also impacts on the significance he places upon baptism. According to Cox, Victorian Ecclesiologists like Gore 'marvelled at the doctrine of the Word-made-flesh as a key to understanding the Church as the Body of Christ, one means whereby the Incarnate One may abide on earth. The Church becomes an outward and visible sign of a vivid inward reality of unity between God and humanity'. ²⁹⁶ For Gore, incorporation into the Church is incorporation into Christ's body, the tangible expression of an individual entering into spiritual relationship with God. As Gore states, 'Christ is our salvation, because in being united to him, we are united to nothing less than God himself'. ²⁹⁷

Whilst every baptised Christian may well enter into the one body, we need to ask: in what sense is this associated with incorporation into a baptismal priesthood, a priesthood of all believers?

Well, Gore believes that through baptism each individual begins a journey of faith, a faith which cannot be realised outside of the Church. This faith opens to each believer the realisation that 'alive in heaven, (Jesus) is also alive in us.

²⁹⁵ Gore, *The Body of Christ* (1901), p. 42

²⁹⁶ Cox, *Priesthood in a New Millennium* (2004), p. 33

²⁹⁷ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 114

He is moulding us inwardly and gradually, in this life and beyond it, into the likeness of that example, which at first he set outwardly before us' (through the incarnation).²⁹⁸ Christ's example is ever before us. We relate to him through his humanity. His attractive ideal stands before us as our aspiration. Through our faith, he touches our inmost being.

For Gore, there is a 'priesthood which is common to all' believers and has a role in helping the world receive the fruits of Christ. This 'priesthood is common to all by virtue of their baptism and confirmation'.²⁹⁹ For Gore, this *baptismal priesthood*, as with all Christian priesthood, is first to find its calling in its committed relationship to Christ. Standing as their example, each believer is called to imitate the qualities they see in him. Added to this, there is another aspect to the *priesthood of all believers* that makes it priestly. Gore continues on to explain:

Not only does each member of the Christian society enjoy on his own behalf and on that of his brethren in Christ the freedom of approach towards God which Christ has won for him; but also he stands, and the whole Christian society stands, before the world as exercising on behalf of all humanity its priestly function. It stands 'lifting up holy hands' on behalf of all men. It thus offers itself to all men as the example and the instrument of reconciliation with God'.³⁰⁰

As faith and trust in Christ grows, so each baptized believer becomes increasingly aware of the infinite love he has for them and in return each

²⁹⁸ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 223

²⁹⁹ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 77

³⁰⁰ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), pp. 65 - 66. Cox discusses Gore's thinking further in: Cox, *Priesthood in a New Millennium* (2004), p. 26

believer begins to respond in a priestly way as they offer themselves as a living testimony to all humanity of the power and fruit of reconciliation with God. Ramsey sums it up thus: ‘...the Christian’s growth in Christ is a part of the growth of the one Body and all its members. His knowledge of Christ grows, as the one Body grows by the due working of all its parts, and as Christ is made complete in all His saints’.³⁰¹

Be this as it may, Gore is also keen to impress that ‘within the Church are those entrusted with a special “ministry of reconciliation”’.³⁰² ‘Bishops and priests, who have specially accepted the responsibility for maintaining the faith and handing it on unimpaired to the generations that are to come’.³⁰³

ii. The Ordained Priesthood

According to Gore, the ‘freedom’ afforded to the *baptismal priesthood* is only possible within the ordered system of the Church.³⁰⁴ It is his consideration that such ‘freedom’ only belongs to a believer as a result of their membership of ‘the Church, (being) baptized and anointed and a communicant, and therefore dependent on the ministry of her clergy’.³⁰⁵ In this way, ‘God offers in support a visible authoritative commission in sacred ministry – “to feed his sheep”’.³⁰⁶ He continues:

‘The Christian ministry is at once, under normal circumstances, God’s provision to strengthen the hands of the spiritual men, the natural guides of souls, by giving them support which comes of the consciousness of an

³⁰¹ Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* (1956 [1936]), p. 37

³⁰² Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), pp. 65 - 66

³⁰³ Gore, *The Basis of Anglican Fellowship*. (London: Forgotten Books, 1914), pp. 6 - 7

³⁰⁴ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 78

³⁰⁵ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 78

³⁰⁶ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 80

irreversible and authoritative commission: and it is also God's provision for days when prophets are few or wanting, that even then there may be the bread of life ministered to hungering souls, and at least the simple proclamation of the revealed truth...'³⁰⁷

In this passage, we see Gore recognising that the baptismal priesthood has a significant role in guiding other souls to God. At the same time, we see how he considers that task impossible outside of the Church and the support the ordained priesthood offers in spiritually feeding them and helping them to grow in the faith by guarding the authenticity of teaching and sacraments.

One needs to be careful not to interpret Gore as devaluing the role of the ordained priesthood. Gore does not agree with his contemporary Lightfoot who completely dismisses the 'sacerdotal system' and moves close to suggesting that the priest is simply a delegate of the congregation.³⁰⁸ For Gore, the ordained priesthood does represent the Spirit endowed congregation, but also has authority itself bestowed by the Spirit at ordination in order to represent God to the congregation through its actions. Gore walks a careful balance in recognising the priesthood holding a special spiritual function under God, whilst at the same time calling for caution in how we understand the difference between the two forms of priesthood. The ordained ministry is no closer to God and is not deemed any better or more effective by virtue of ordination. But neither is everyone really the same.

³⁰⁷ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 80

³⁰⁸ Lightfoot, *The Christian Ministry* (1901), p. 1; Gore rejects Lightfoot's conclusions completely in Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), pp. 311 - 314

On the one hand Gore tries not to suggest that the baptismal priesthood is able to replace the important role that the ordained priesthood has to play in the ordering of Christ's Church and its sacramental principles. Whilst on the other, and as we explored earlier in this chapter, he is keen to dismiss any notion of the ordained priesthood being a special caste. Avis paraphrases Gore's stance this way: 'While Gore defends the term 'priesthood', as applied to the ordained, he equally insists that the whole Church is 'a high priestly race' because 'it lives in the full enjoyment of [Christ's] reconciliation and is the instrument through which the whole world is to be reconciled to God'. Gore is quite clear that the ordained have a 'representative, not vicarious role'.³⁰⁹ As Gore clarifies: 'the difference between clergy and laity 'is not a difference of kind but function'.³¹⁰ For Gore, the 'reception of eucharistic grace, the approach to God in eucharistic sacrifice, are functions of the whole body... But the ministry (of ordained priesthood) is the organ – the necessary organ – of these functions.'³¹¹

Gore works hard to establish an understanding of priesthood that at once encourages and supports the ministry of every believer – a ministry of witness and fellowship bestowed at baptism – whilst ensuring that the ministry of the ordained priesthood is appropriately supported as being charged with spiritual and sacramental oversight, guidance and ensuring that the Church's key sacramental functions remain authentic to Christ's example.

All these undertakings include a necessary gathering of community and so we see a healthy balance in Gore's thinking where the two modes of priesthood

³⁰⁹ Paul Avis, *A Ministry Shaped by Mission* (London: T & T Clark, 2007 [2005]), p. 74

³¹⁰ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 71

³¹¹ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 73

are inseparable. In more recent times Guiver has described it thus: 'the priest is no independent species – the laity are part of the picture of what the priest is, and the priest is a part of the picture of what the laity are'.³¹² And so, we are once again touching upon something communal at the core of Gore's sacramental thinking. If Gore believes that the priesthood and the sacraments have an innately communal or social aspect, then we should now turn to exploring what he understands this to be.

f) Sacraments – Social Ceremonies

Gore is absolutely convinced that the real wisdom behind the sacraments is that they are both divinely instituted and communal; they are at once gifts from God and binders of community. The two are inseparable. Gore understands these 'social actions' to encompass the spiritual richness of Christ's life through their materiality. This, he believes, is in keeping with both the example of the incarnational witness (in human form) and the rich complexity of created humanity (social, being made of matter). So we return to considerations to do with Gore's Christology and theological anthropology. In the sacraments God binds up the community into his loving arms and unites them with Christ in his heavenly splendour through the fellowship's joint engagement in the Church's spiritual ceremonial life. Gore states:

And the obligation of fellowship in the society was presented in a concrete shape by the institution of sacraments, that is, visible and symbolical actions, which were both appointed channels of divine grace and at the same time social ceremonies which admitted into the full membership of the society,

³¹² George Guiver et al, *Priests in a People's Church* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2001), p. vii

baptism and the laying on of hands and a ceremony by which membership was maintained and expressed – the breaking of bread.³¹³

At this point we may naturally ponder the consequences for our understanding of ordained priesthood. Through the sacraments, the priesthood is called to nurture the entire body and promote the equality of all. As the convener of the body and the celebrant of the rite, this requires the priest to exercise integrity within the liturgical offering, recognising themselves and everyone else they serve as equally valued³¹⁴ within the sacred gathering. This fact is not lost on Gore, for if the sacraments are ‘social ceremonies’, then they must also invite all to engage with equal standing.³¹⁵ Waddell interprets Gore’s thinking this way: ‘That incorporation, that communion of transformed lives in Christ, is what we call the Church. It happens supremely through the sacraments... the

³¹³ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), p. 38

³¹⁴ This raises the question of how Gore can speak of equality in the Church when at the time of writing ordained ministry was not open to both genders? There is no way of knowing what position Gore may have supported regarding the ordination of women today. It is clear, however, that Gore considered that the Church (and the Eucharist) should offer a challenge to any corrupted social norms. The Church should seek to reconcile and unite amidst any division, and where there was prejudice it should exert fairness. The Church was to be a force for good in society and challenge immoral political structures. All of this speaks of an aspiration towards true equality in all its forms. Two contrasting considerations in Gore’s legacy should be noted here. On 28 September 1917, Gore famously licensed 21 women as lay readers, possibly the first bishop to do so. On the other hand, Gore also showed some strong conservative tendencies especially in regards to certain doctrinal and social ‘norms’.

³¹⁵ How can Gore speak of the body holding equal standing in the Eucharist without undermining the distinction between priest and people? Our modern sense of entitlement is not helpful here. Sometimes discussion of equality within a body that includes different roles and levels of authority within it can sound rather nonsensical. We should consider, however, that our understanding of equality may not be as uncorrupted as we would like to believe it to be. Today, we are as influenced by our sociological situation as Gore was in his era. This means that as we ponder what equality may truly mean for the body of the Church, we may wish to consider its modern-day association of equality with individual entitlement. These two concepts are often in glaring disparity with one another, and yet in contemporary society a sense of individual entitlement has heavily influenced our understanding of what equality means in a way that wouldn’t have been true for Gore. Each person within the body can be equally valued whilst being called to different roles within that body. As we explored earlier, for Gore, priests are not an elite caste elevated to a special place ‘above’ the rest of the body, they are a part of the same body and equal to every other member in the way God approaches them through the sacraments. They are, however, set apart to oversee and convene the body and to ensure that the Church’s action continues to relate to God’s action through teaching, actions and sacraments.

sacramental and the political were as one... (Through the sacraments) human beings encounter each other as brothers and sisters. The Eucharist is to be the end of exploitation.’³¹⁶

Gore draws on an Aristotelian concept of the human condition in order to expand our thinking. ‘First’, he says, ‘[the Church] is natural: it corresponds to a law of our nature. Aristotle said long ago that man is a social animal. The meaning of this is that though society is made up of individuals, and indeed the aim of society is the development of the faculties of the individual, yet no man realises his individuality only by the relations to a society’.³¹⁷ What Gore is challenging here is the ever prevailing concept of spiritual individualism – as prominent (or possibly more so) in our present age as it was in his own. Gore sees equality in community as promoting this important spiritual facet; a guard against the destructiveness of spiritual individualism. Gore says, ‘the attachment of the particular spiritual gifts, by divine institution, to sacraments – that is, to social ceremonies, is the divine provision against spiritual individualism.’³¹⁸

Anyone called into community, called to share the social sacramental gifts of God in equality, must accept that, whilst being valued as an individual, they are not able to fully realise who they are designed to be, to become truly human, unless they are fully committed to that same community where they are fed – a community of other equally valued individuals. God draws individuals into the body and priests work on behalf of the body. Gore’s theological understanding of ‘social sacraments’ does not start with a theory

³¹⁶ Waddell, *Charles Gore: Radical Anglican* (2014), p. xxviii

³¹⁷ Gore, *The Mission of the Church* (1892), pp. 8 - 9

³¹⁸ Gore, *The Body of Christ* (1901), pp. 41 - 42

that everyone can do everything, nor that priests do them to the laity. It starts with 'the body' as a differentiated whole: a structure in which priests are a part which helps the body to achieve its aims; temporal, eternal, material and sociological.

Consequently, Gore considers the soul to be formed and fed through being a member of the body. This cannot be replaced by individual spiritual wandering. These 'social' sacraments by their corporate and material nature are therefore instrumental in directing each soul towards the divine reality.

g) Sacraments and the Soul.

So far in this chapter, we have seen how Gore considers that Christ through the incarnation shows us the most authentic example of how to enter back into relationship with God, and the Church conveys this truth through its teachings, actions and rituals.

Gore also believes that the Church is called to proclaim Christ's love to the world and through the Spirit points towards the eschatological conclusion of creation. All of this is grounded in material and communal characteristics through the sacraments.

Ordained priests reflect this through their actions, grounded in a sacramental imperative and sharing in Christ's priesthood by virtue of their ordination. In spite of this, Gore does not consider the priesthood to be an elite caste, set apart from the Church body. In Gore's understanding, priests are called to convene and unite the body of the faithful and ensure that the Church's action continues to relate to God's action through words, activities and sacraments;

sacramental functions based in material and earthly things. All of this has spiritual connotations, and as we continue on, we will discover how Gore considers the spiritual and material completely interdependent upon one another. The spiritual reality of the sacraments is revealed through their material objects. The same is true for humanity – the soul completely dependent upon the body. Sacraments then are about forming the soul by uniting spiritual truths in material undertakings. If one were to follow Gore's logic and try and describe in a few words what the ordained priesthood is called to in all of this, one would likely conclude that formation, engagement and relationship are all central facets to their ministry.

Gore's anthropology sees humanity as primarily of spiritual nature in need of restoration from sinfulness and corruption. It is no surprise, then, that 'spirituality' runs through every aspect of Gore's thought. As Waddell states: 'Gore thought all the themes – politics, ecclesiology, Christology - ... intimately and inextricably bound up with our spiritual life: they are our spiritual life, considered under different aspects and from different angles'.³¹⁹ They form our personality, our spirituality and our soul. Williams ventures that 'we live in a society, and indeed as part of a fallen humanity, that deceives us constantly about what we most deeply want'.³²⁰ Gore was only too aware of the perilous journey and the many pitfalls this presented. For him, an holistic understanding of the formation of the soul and its dependency upon the materiality of life provided the 'most convincing refutation of a great deal of language used in the repudiation of the sacramental principle'.³²¹ Much of this principle has been

³¹⁹ Waddell, *Charles Gore: Radical Anglican* (2014), p. 162

³²⁰ Rowan Williams, 'Making Moral Decisions'. In R. Gill (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 4

³²¹ Gore, *The Body of Christ* (1901), p. 37

explored above, and as is evident Gore considers that without it, without the spiritual and material engagement of these social ceremonies, humanity's condition would be completely subjected, without challenge, to the whims of its currently flawed state. To his mind this would, by inference, diminish the plausibility of being able to acquire immortality of the soul (salvation). Furthermore, development of the soul towards God is fully dependent upon participation in the Church. As he states:

God may indeed ultimately take the soul into His own absolutely equitable hands, to reconstitute it solely in view of its individual possibilities and responsibilities, but for this world, at least, its whole condition, spiritual as well as material, is, to a degree which is not easy to exaggerate, dependent upon the society which is responsible for it...³²²

Eternal salvation is completely dependent upon the soul's development towards reuniting with God, and that progress is not just the responsibility of the individual, but also the community of believers, the Church to which they belong. This is why for Gore, the priesthood holds a central responsibility for ensuring that the gathered community remains obedient to the disciplines of Christ, as communicated through the teachings, sacraments and orders of the Church. It is no surprise to discover then that Gore is uncompromising in his belief that through the Church and its sacraments we are united to Christ and see that 'Christ is our salvation, because in being united to him, we are united to nothing less than God himself'.³²³ What is notable here, is how closely Gore aligns the Church's action with God's action in reuniting the individual soul to

³²² Gore, *The Body of Christ* (1901), pp. 40 - 41

³²³ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 114

Godself. In fact, Gore is clear that God acts through the worshipping community to bring the individual soul back to himself.

Here, we begin to see the deep spiritual significance of Gore's sacramental theology for the formation of the soul, because Gore believes that the soul is indisputably bound up with materiality and corporality. Gore appears to understand the soul and body as materially and spiritually bound on earth and interdependent upon one another. He states:

[the soul] is by God's creative will indisputably attached to material conditions; and as such conditions as are in experience found the most liable to be misused, and to become not material only but carnal. This does at least give us something to think about. It shows us something of the mind of God. This dependence of the immortal spirit – the only seat of human spirituality – upon material conditions, at its origin and throughout its existence upon the earth...³²⁴

The soul is inseparable from the body in this life and it is through the lived experience of earthly conditions that the soul is formed and refined towards the Godhead, most especially through 'the divine society: the Church and its 'social ceremonies'.³²⁵ Gore considers body and soul completely united and inseparable in a formational earthly pilgrimage designed to assist the individual's aspirations to reach potential immortality with God. The soul is bound to material things and as such every aspect and experience of life is subjected to spiritual dimensions. Gore sees the soul as 'destined for immortal fellowship with God' and as having 'tremendous and eternal possibilities'.³²⁶ It

³²⁴ Gore, *The Body of Christ* (1901), pp. 36 - 37

³²⁵ Gore, *The Body of Christ* (1901), pp. 41 - 42

³²⁶ Gore, *The Body of Christ* (1901), pp. 36 - 37

is, therefore, for the Church and its ministerial orders to provide appropriate and authentic opportunities for the individual to recognise, nurture and grow towards God through sacramental and corporate engagement.

h) Concluding Thoughts

This chapter has given us much insight into Gore's theological understanding of the Church, the ordained priesthood, the baptismal priesthood, the sacramental principles of the Church and its ministry and how all these help unite the individual soul to the Trinity.

Earlier in this chapter, we recalled how Gore sees the ministerial orders of the Church as instituted by Christ; that he understands the Church, through its ordained ministry, having a responsibility for authentically preserving what Christ instituted; and passing it on to each new generation in appropriate ways. We explored how in Christ Gore sees the most perfect way of entering into relationship with God and how the Church is called to communicate and encourage this through its teachings, actions and rituals. Gore believes that these, authentically delivered, are on some level the most reliable representation of God after the incarnation. Each refers back to the incarnational example, and their authenticity rests in the actions and instructions of Christ himself.

Gore also believes that the Church is called to proclaim Christ's love to the world and that the Spirit invigorates the Church with the life of Christ. This life is entirely consistent with the Church's authentic function through which the Spirit has consistently been active and points towards the eschatological

conclusion of creation. Gore shows how all of this is grounded in material and communal characteristics.

For the priesthood, all of this is reflected in their actions, after the example of Christ and on behalf of the church body. This is grounded in a sacramental imperative. Gore does not consider the Eucharist, or any other sacrament, to be privileges of an elite priestly caste, but instead Gore recognises priests as set apart to convene the body of the faithful and ensure that the Church's action continues to relate to God's action through words, actions and sacraments. These sacramental functions are based in material and earthly things.

For the ordained priesthood then, it is this sacramental and social concern that helps form its identity. Gore considers that the priesthood is to reveal the grace of God through interpretation and sacramental actions so that individual believers may begin to unite themselves with his divine will.³²⁷ In order to do this, each individual must unite themselves to the corporate body, the Church, and, together with the individual, the Church also bears responsibility for each member's spiritual wellbeing and growth. Because of the interdependence of each individual soul upon the material body, the Church does this through its material and social ceremonies, the sacraments, which in themselves help to form and realign each individual soul to Christ.

³²⁷ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), pp. 7 - 8

Conclusion and Application to the Present Situation

a) Gore's Theology of Priesthood as Discussed in this Dissertation

In the first chapter, looking at the incarnation, we explored how Gore considers the human race to be in great peril if it were not for God's own intervention in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ, who redeems humanity. This is because, in Gore's understanding, Christ enables humanity to know God more completely and opens up the means to enter more fully into relationship with him through actual living union, where spiritual infirmity may be healed. Christ offers a remedy for the morally corrupted world and thus a route back into the divine relationship.

Gore believes that Christ does not come to approve the messiness of broken humanity, but to reunite the flesh to spiritual purity, a purity similar and yet superior to what is experienced in Eden, so that humanity may experience holistic completeness through its earthly pilgrimage. Hence, Gore sees Christ as re-orientating our outlook in order to bring about an objective change to our situation so that we may experience unity with the Father.

To Gore, Christ lives a perfect and uncorrupted existence. Free from sin and yet confronted with all the temptation of worldly experience, Christ offers an example of completeness, void of the separation and damage that sin can erode at the base of the human soul. In this way, Christ is the example of both human perfection and the 'legitimate climax of natural development',³²⁸ revealing the ways one may come to know God better, whilst also repairing the previously broken relationship. Thus, the incarnational example draws

³²⁸ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 18

creation into the life of the Spirit because Christ shows us the true nature of God, which is unqualified love. As such Christ opens God up to us so that we may come to know God more fully, whilst also reconciling us to God by re-establishing the means by which we may enter back into relationship with him.

Gore interprets Christ as fulfilling the Old Law and Levitical Priesthood by exhibiting a refreshed understanding of priestly life based on moral purity, integrity and service. For Gore, Christ ushers in a new era of moral justice based upon compassion and forgiveness. In this way Christ exhibits high-priestly credentials: he is a crescendo of moral authority and the quintessence of sacrificial life and priesthood. Thus, his life proves essential for humanity's salvation.

As we dig deeper into Gore's thought we become enlightened by the realisation that Gore sees a significant feature of Christ's priestly nature advancing humanity towards perfect union with God, by helping each individual recognise God's action infusing Christ's life into them by the work of the Spirit and encouraging them to draw others into the same awareness. For Gore, Christ helps humanity live more in tune with the indwelling Holy Spirit evident in the created order. Christ's priestly personality grounded in love and compassion enables creation to enter into the divine life more fully. Living in that love, humanity is more readily able to see the miraculous in the world around it by developing a purer spiritual vision. And so, for Gore, priesthood as it is witnessed in Christ is associated with helping each human being live most authentically according to the image that God has implanted in them, thereby helping them grow into a healthier relationship with God the Creator.

Gore understands Christ as the essence of the priestly life, in which prayer, resisting temptation to sin and nurturing a deep relationship with God are all key. The qualities of love, service, truth, justice, self-sacrifice and compassion all feature prominently in the example he lays down.

Gore believes that this is only possible because Christ is the embodiment uncorrupted humanity, whilst portraying the very attributes of God. Through the nature of his death Christ absorbs death into the divine life and by his resurrection he overcomes the power that the fear of death has on humanity, by offering renewed hope.

In Gore's understanding, Christ reveals that sin is unnatural and that sinless humanity is the more natural and desirable state. This is a state we see exhibited perfectly in Christ, and in him we see the most authentic personality of God.³²⁹ Gore informs us of how, in Christ, God 'has shown that he is alive; in human nature he has given glimpses of his mind and character'.³³⁰ Thus, through Christ, we see that God is ultimate love. Christ is the consummation of the Old Testament prophecies partly because, in him, this love is intertwined with his faithfulness, justice, compassion and truth, all divine traits recognisable throughout the Hebrew Scriptures.³³¹ From this position, Gore believes that Christ is the embodiment of the priestly life, grounded in service and grace, rather than law. He ushers in a new era of moral justice based upon compassion and forgiveness, where a new form of relationship with God is working within us in the new covenant through the work of the Spirit. And so,

³²⁹ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 35

³³⁰ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 33

³³¹ See Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 121

to Gore's mind, Christ is the embodiment of sacrificial priesthood, affording him the position of eternal high-priest.

Gore considers that Christ, through his divine nature, reveals the richest exposition of God. As prophet Christ reveals the essence of God's loving nature through words and actions. As priest, Christ offers reconciliation with God through his once-for-all-time sacrifice for sin and enables healing of the previously broken relationship. As king, exalted high-priest, robed in eternal splendour and sitting at the Father's right hand, he governs the universe, mediates for the sin that separates humanity from God and moves creation towards its eschatological conclusion.

Thus, we see how Christ's priestly credentials are important in order for humanity to enter more readily into relationship with God. In the incarnation we see both revelation and reconciling action. Sinless nature being the more desirable state, and following Christ's priestly example, resisting evil and repentance for any wrong doing are attributes that the Church and its ministerial orders are called to promote so that humanity may aspire towards a higher spiritual state, ultimately communion with God. Christ's life, example and teaching draws followers into his divine life and in turn implants the divine life within his followers. As this divine life works within us it moves creation towards its eschatological conclusion in the Triune God.

Gore concludes that: 'Alive in heaven, he is also alive in us. He is moulding us inwardly and gradually, in this life and beyond it, into the likeness of that example, which at the first he set outwardly before us'.³³² As believers in the

³³² Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 223

divine revelation, we are reworked, even healed, by the life of Christ working in us through the Spirit as a result of our inclusion in the Church body, through which God the Creator is causing new life to grow and flourish. The Church is the means by which we may be united to Christ, because, as Gore states: 'Christ is our salvation, because in being united to him, we are united to nothing less than God himself'.³³³ As such, Gore considers that the nature of Christian priesthood is to reveal, lead and realign humanity towards the redemptive rewards won by Christ through the cross and resurrection. The Church's ministerial orders look to the example of Christ, promoting those attributes of behaviour, teaching and personality discernible through his priestly existence.

This is how Gore comes to see the Church as an 'extension of the incarnation', because it continues what Christ began by disclosing God's works of salvation to each new age.³³⁴ And so he believes that the ministerial priesthood is called to act as an aid in revealing the divine goodness drawing near and as an instrument for the restoration of relationship to God.

As Christ is the second volume of the divine revelation, Gore sees the Church and its ministerial orders as forming the bridge between Christ's incarnation and the final chapter when all things will be gathered to the divine goodness through Christ. It embodies the principles of Christ and infuses and enfolds the lives of its members with his life. It is this 'life' that makes the Church Christ's continuing body in the temporal world by way of his Spirit.

³³³ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 114

³³⁴ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 219

Considering the scriptural evidence, Gore sees reason to claim that the Church is divinely instituted by Christ who shows clear intentionality regarding how the Church is to develop before he ascends to the Father. Gore is convinced that there is a wealth of further historical evidence to back this up, most especially from the first two centuries of the Church. He considers that the Church is created as God's action in the world and not by humans in response to God's action. This divine direction at the very centre of the Church's formation and progress proves to be a significant building block in his entire theology of priesthood. This leads him to understand that after the incarnation the next stage of the divine masterplan is the Church and the life it breathes is the very breath of Christ himself.

Drawing further conclusions from scriptural and patristic evidence, Gore believes that Christ shows clear intentionality regarding how the Church develops and orders itself. As the Church expands, so common unity is found in the apostles' leadership, teaching and oversight, on account of them having been chosen by Christ and experiencing his ministry and the events of his life first hand. In this way, Gore considers that from the very earliest times, to be a Christian means being a member of the Church and committed to the flourishing of the society, under a common unity which finds its focus in the Creed and the 'visible Church'; which to Gore's mind includes apostolic succession, the threefold ministry and being under the apostles' oversight and direction. Gore does not interpret these as stifling diversity, far from it, it is precisely the security found within the boundaries of this shared focus that enables local diversity to flourish within the early church, according to local culture and need.

Gore sees the threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons beginning its life in individual churches under the apostles' oversight. Gore interprets the evidence as showing that initially, in some churches at least, the bishop and presbyter are indistinguishable, and that both titles are often used to refer to the same individual. Over time, as more and more churches grow up, the model matures into one that we would consider recognisable today. Apostles begin handing more and more responsibility to individual bishops who become the head of their local college of presbyters. Gore also sees evidence of the apostles slowly handing on their authority in its entirety, and so the local bishop begins to be seen as standing in the apostle's place and the threefold ministerial order grows up to be a central focus for unity under the bishops' oversight. As each bishop passes down their authority to the next so the principle of apostolic succession is firmly secured.

Gore deduces a concern within the early church for the process to be appropriately governed from above, and so a spiritual discernment of selecting bishops, priests and deacons is adopted where candidates are recognised according to spiritual, moral and prayerful integrity, affirmed through the congregation and sanctioned by the apostolic representatives. This is not a task centred, earthly approach to suitability, but a spiritual one. For Gore, ordination is a significant part of the process, precisely because at ordination God bestows through the bishop's actions something of the Spirit of Christ's priesthood upon the person. Christ's priesthood remains unique and exemplary with each ordained bishop, priest or deacon drawing their ministry from his. Gore alludes to an ontological change taking place within each individual at the point of ordination, individual callings fulfilled by grace, as they

become spiritual instruments for Christ's redemptive qualities and salvific nature, which draws them through the Spirit into the body and life of Christ.

Gore understands the Church, through its ordained ministry, having a responsibility for authentically preserving what Christ instituted and passing it on to each new generation in appropriate ways. In Christ, Gore sees the most perfect way of entering into relationship with God. Christ stands in his high priesthood as prophet, priest and king, re-establishing the means of relationship with God through witness, participation and (individual and corporate) obedience. The Church is called to communicate, encourage and provide access to this through its teachings, actions and rituals so that Christian life corresponds with the prophetic, priestly, kingly work of Christ. Gore believes that these, authentically delivered, are on some level the most reliable representation of God after the incarnation. This is because, if authentic, they refer back to the incarnational example, and their authenticity rests in the actions and instructions of Christ himself.

Gore also believes that the Spirit invigorates the Church with the life of Christ so that it may proclaim Christ's love to the world. This life is entirely consistent with the Church's authentic function through which the Spirit has consistently been active and points towards the eschatological conclusion of creation.

Ordained ministers are called to follow the example of Christ's priesthood on behalf of the Church body through their actions, so that the entire body may be drawn deeper into the life of Christ, through the work of Spirit. This is grounded in a sacramental imperative. In the sacraments, and especially in the Eucharist, Gore sees Christ being made present through his eternal

offering: the sacrifice of the cross. By the community's joint participation and re-membrance, every Eucharist makes Christ's eternal sacrifice present and actual in the offering of bread and wine. For Gore, the Eucharist (and other sacraments) transcend the limits of time and space as each unites the gathered body with Christ's prophetic, priestly and kingly action, and thus exists simultaneously past, present and future.

Sharing in Christ's priesthood, the ordained priest stands as the intermediary between heaven and earth, helping the earthly church body participate in those eternal realities. As bread and wine are placed on the Altar, prayers said and the words of Christ recited, so Christ transforms them with his eternal sacrifice, changing them into his body and blood so that the Church is given access to his atoning reality.

Gore identifies two significant aspects that underlie each sacrament and give them their potency. The first is that they all use material objects to communicate and effect spiritual grace. The second is that they are all communal, drawing each individual believer into the community in which the life of Christ is active. In Gore's understanding, the individual aspect of faith cannot be separated from an individual's calling into the community of faith, past, present and future. So, coming to faith is to Gore incorporation into the Church which is also incorporation into Christ's body; a tangible expression of an individual entering into spiritual relationship with God the Trinity, who exhibits perfect unity and embraces eternal community.

The spiritual reality of the sacraments is revealed through their material objects in order to engage the entire being of the person whose soul is likewise

completely dependent upon the body. These sacramental functions are based in material and earthly things, precisely because sacraments are about forming the soul by uniting spiritual truths in material undertakings. In this way, sacraments, these material and social ceremonies, help to form and realign each individual soul to Christ through bodily engagement.

This sacramental and social concern helps form the identity of the ordained priesthood. Gore considers that the priesthood is to reveal the grace of God through interpretation and sacramental actions so that individual believers may begin to unite themselves with God's divine will.³³⁵ In order to do this, all individuals have a responsibility to unite themselves to the corporate body, the Church, and as a consequence the Church bears some responsibility for each member's spiritual wellbeing and growth.

Even though Gore considers the priesthood to be called into a specific spiritual function within the Church, he does not consider the Eucharist, or any other sacrament, to be privileges of an elite priestly caste, but instead recognises priests as simply set apart in the Spirit to convene the body of the faithful and ensure that the Church's action continues to relate to God's action through words, actions and sacramental integrity. This proves to be significant for Gore's understanding of the ordained priesthood and its distinction from the baptismal priesthood (also referred to as the priesthood of all believers).

In Gore's understanding, the baptismal priesthood finds its calling in two significant areas of the Church's mission. First, the baptismal priesthood is called into a committed communal and individual relationship with Christ. For

³³⁵ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), pp. 7 - 8

those called to a lay model of priesthood by virtue of their baptism into Christ, they are first and foremost to be an outward testimony to the world by their very lives lived in faith and commitment to Christ through the Church body. They are a testimony to the fruit of a life lived with God. Second, they have a role in guiding other souls to God and are the Church's outward mission 'in the world' offering themselves as a powerful testimony of what reconciliation with God can nurture within each individual.

Gore understands that the ordained priesthood is called to live similarly as any other baptised Christian, but that they also hold a 'special ministry of reconciliation'.³³⁶ It is Gore's deep seated belief that the ordained ministry is not set aside for some kind of spiritual privilege, for all are equal before God. However, Gore does consider that they have a special place in the ordering of the Church to ensure that the rest of the gathered body, the entire baptismal priesthood, are spiritually fed and grow through authentic teaching and sacramental engagement. In this way the entire body is invigorated by the Spirit and drawn into the life of Christ which advances creation towards its eschatological conclusion.

What we have discovered in this dissertation and then rounded off in this conclusory segment forms the significant discovery of this research. Nonetheless, having discovered the depth and richness of Gore's theology of priesthood, it would now feel slightly incomplete if we were not to fleetingly consider what Gore's understanding may have to offer a few significant points of contemporary debate on the subject of Christian ministry. The contemporary

³³⁶ Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), pp. 55 - 56

debate is vast and there is little space here to do it proper justice, but it may be that what we begin other scholars, with far greater insight in this regard, may be able to develop further in times to come. Therefore, we now move to completion by considering what Gore's insight may offer concerning three most significant contemporary issues concerning the theology of priesthood; namely the effect that individualism, obsession with task and experientialism has on the Church's current approach to ordained ministry.

b) A General State of Concern.

There is no shortage of contemporary scholars who voice a concern regarding the condition of theological understanding concerning ministerial orders within the Church.³³⁷ These observers claim that a number of perceived difficulties are damaging central ecclesiology and the deep historical structures of Christianity. If these claims are true, then it would seem imperative that the Church reignites its common interest in a true understanding of ordained ministry. This was in part the catalyst behind undertaking this research. From what we have discovered in this dissertation, Charles Gore would doubtless be sympathetic to this concern. Gore has considerable regard for the Church's

³³⁷ For example see Cox, *Priesthood in a New Millennium* (2004); various chapters within Goergen & Garrido (eds.), *The Theology of Priesthood* (2000); Gerhard Müller, *Priesthood and Diaconate*, M. Miller (Trans.) (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002); Thomas Rausch, *Priesthood Today: an Appraisal* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1992); Thomas McGovern, *Priestly Identity: A Study in the Theology of Priesthood* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2002); Andrew Greeley, *Priests* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); various chapters within Donald Dietrich (ed.), *Priests for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Crossroads Publishing, 2006); Jean Galot, *Theology of the Priesthood* (2005); Donald Cozzens, *The Changing Face of the Church* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000); Guiver et al, *The Fire and the Clay* (1993); Ward, *On Christian Priesthood* (2011); Robin Greenwood, *Transforming Priesthood* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2001); Gordon Oliver, *Ministry Without Madness* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2012); Henri Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer* (New York: Doubleday, 1979); Arthur Michael Ramsey, *The Christian Priest Today* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1985); Don Saines, 'Wider, Broader, Richer: Trinitarian Theology and Ministerial Order', in *The Anglican Theological Review*, Frederick Borsch, W. Mark Richardson & Ellen K. Wondra (eds.), 92, No 3 (Evanston: Anglican Theological Review, 2010), pp. 511 - 535...

understanding of priesthood and, as we have seen, much of what he produces as a result is directly concerned with attending to this.³³⁸

i. Individualism

Through his deeply social understanding of the Church and the sacraments, Gore offers a challenge to the modern-day individualism that ravages the communal underpinning of the Church. Gore opposes the commonly held notion that the Christian faith is only concerned with an individual's personal relationship to Christ.³³⁹ Gore asserts that Christianity is primarily about allegiance to Christ through commitment to the gathered body and engagement in its sacramental undertakings. Personal relationship is an important factor, but only under the wider imperative of communal faithfulness. For Gore, we mature into the Christians we are called to be through obedience and service to Christ, becoming less concerned about ourselves and less dominated by our feelings. He states, 'by losing our lives in Christ and his cause, we are meant to save them; to serve Christ, not to feel Christ, is the mark of his true servants; they become Christian in proportion as they cease to be interested in themselves and become absorbed in their Lord'.³⁴⁰

This is a stark challenge to those who would associate their allegiance to Church as about quality of experience or momentary theological whim. To Gore's mind, Christian faith is about something far deeper than such partiality will allow. It is a communal gathering of faithful individuals uniting together

³³⁸ Cox, *Priesthood in a New Millennium* (2004), p. 13

³³⁹ See the previous chapter on Sacramental Principles & Gore, *Orders and Unity* (1909), p. 40

³⁴⁰ Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 4

within the ecclesial legitimacy and continuity derived from the apostles under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and sanctioned by Christ.

In an age where the embracing of all-round diversity too often paradoxically undermines the claim that different individuals are called to serve God in different ways, Gore offers a radical counter-claim: one does not recognise the crucial importance and distinction of lay ministry by denying ordained ministry the same. This is a critical point. There is a most aggressive force in our current age apparently attempting to flatten out distinction of hierarchy in the ungrounded assumption that it in some way allows for greater recognition of diversity and individual calling. Whilst it is necessary that the Church has a healthy understanding of hierarchy: one which enables debate and attends properly to individual concerns and aspirations, it is also vital that the Church is ordered through those chosen and sanctioned by the Spirit and tasked with keeping the Church authentic to the Gospel imperative. Gore shows us how God can be equally present to every individual, whilst, at the same time, each individual is called uniquely to serve God in different ways. Gore offers us a reminder that God calls us in distinction to different orders for the blessing of creation and ordering of his Church. He outlines how the foundation of all Christian ministry rests in the sacraments and the ordained priesthood is called to minister these gifts of God. Gore reveals how the sacraments (together with Scripture and shared creedal belief) are fundamental to faith and how essential it is that we have ministerial orders to ensure and protect their administration.

ii. Task over Office

Billings, Heywood and Greenwood all question whether the ordering of the Church in its present form is fit for purpose. They claim to observe a lack of

clarity over role and decline in confidence over *abilities* within the ordained ministry as leading to the Church being ineffectual. This leads loosely to them conclude that the answer lies in some kind of reimagined ministry.³⁴¹ The real concern is that they seem to approach the problem from a purely task-centred perspective of ministry. We can identify an historical and theological underpinning here similar to that of Lightfoot, interpreting the ordering of the Church as something negotiable according to a human perception of need.³⁴²

It could be said, however, that this worldly obsession with task is a part of the problem. The Church of today needs to be mindful of how a 21st Century western managerial mind-set combined with an approach to interpreting history which can remove space for an acknowledgement of the work of the divine within it, can seriously distort our understanding of God's direction for his Church. As Pritchard points out, 'task centred approaches, those that try to provide a blueprint of tasks in an honourable attempt to help today's (or yesterday's) ordained priesthood to better cope with the pressures of the 'role', are rarely timeless. Often only tiny elements of what they propose have the blessing of being relevant beyond their given moment'.³⁴³

As Allen evaluates, 'There is a good deal of confusion about. Some appear to think that priests are simply the managers of the Church or that priesthood is a professional calling like other caring roles.'³⁴⁴ Croft and Oliver add their voices to the bank of opinion outlining the dangers to the priestly office from

³⁴¹ Alan Billings, *Making God Possible* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2010), pp. 1 - 9; David Heywood, *Reimagining Ministry* (London: SCM Press, 2011), p. 1 - 9; Robin Greenwood, *Transforming Priesthood* (2001), p. 1 - 3

³⁴² Lightfoot, *The Christian Ministry* (1901), pp. 7 - 25

³⁴³ John Pritchard, *The Life and Work of a Priest* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2007), p. ix

³⁴⁴ Peter Allen, 'Who is the 'real me'?'. In Guiver et al, *The Fire and the Clay* (1993), p. 7

such individualistic, task centred and secularly focused attempts at an answer.³⁴⁵ It is understandable then, why to Allen's mind such approaches have only exacerbated the problem.³⁴⁶ If the priesthood simply tries to respond to every passing whim and has no solid theological grounding, no central harmonization of what it understands God calls the ordained ministry to, then not only does it risk increasing a sense of confusion and fracas, but the whole Church is threatened with losing its central ecclesiological structure and spiritual integrity.

To a climate where such a dominant task-centred approach to ministry may be said to undermine the spiritual foundation of ministerial orders, Gore also stands as a formidable opponent. Working within Gore's theological framework of priesthood, we see how he considers ordained ministry to be primarily based in spiritual integrity and the historical acknowledgement of God's direction in the formation of the Church's ordering. Managing churches and congregations, and all the material demands that are inevitably associated with it in the 21st Century, can as easily be the enterprise of the baptismal priesthood as it can be the ordained. If Gore teaches us anything, it is that supernatural concerns supersede all others in relation to the calling of individuals to the ordained ministry and this supernatural calling finds its base in the threefold order. Those involved in the preparation of candidates for this essential ministry would do well to ponder Gore's warnings and absorb his theological framework. Gore shows how gaining experience and acquiring practical skills must always run secondary to the nurture of spiritual integrity

³⁴⁵ Oliver's book touches on this throughout and the whole of chapter two of Croft's book is concerned with this very issue. Oliver, *Ministry Without Madness* (2012); also see Steven Croft, *Ministry in Three Dimensions* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1999), pp. 17 - 29

³⁴⁶ Peter Allen, 'Who is the 'real me'?'. In Guiver et al, *The Fire and the Clay* (1993), p. 7

and deepening of relationship to God. Reimagining ministry throughout every layer of the Church, lay and ordained, may well be prudent in response to modern demands, but if we are to follow Gore's direction, then ordained ministry must remain rooted in apostolic succession, the threefold order and a sacramental priesthood that draws its ministry directly from Christ's high-priesthood; holding up the incarnational ideal and drawing new generations of believers into the way of the Spirit and the life of Christ through engagement with his Church.

iii. Experientialism

Reflecting on the contemporary situation, Robin Ward voices a concern that 'there has been a loss of nerve in contemporary English Anglicanism which perceives all too well... that the parish churches which seem to be most flourishing are those which often have least interest in preserving anything but the most tangential purchase on the shape and context of traditional Anglican piety'.³⁴⁷ Ward's is an insightful observation. Over recent decades there has been a sharp increase in short-lived experiential, non-sacramental approaches to worship, aimed at instant experience and gratification as opposed to deeper forms of spiritual engagement. This increase in experiential approaches seems to be due to a belief that they attract greater numbers than more traditional approaches. There are many concerns one could raise about this recent phenomenon, but most pertinent to this dissertation is the danger that the more worship begins to look like a combination of a secular music festival and a business conference, the less the deeper spiritual and sacramental aspects of the priestly calling will be valued as an essential part

³⁴⁷ Ward, *On The Christian Priesthood* (2001), p. 141

in the process of redirecting humanity's vision towards God. Without this, the Christian church will undoubtedly be by far the poorer and more ineffectual.

Recent research into church growth challenges the assumption that only less traditional churches grow. The Church of England's research paper entitled '*From Anecdote to Evidence*' found that growth in congregational numbers appears to have less to do with tradition and more to do with intention and quality.³⁴⁸ Those places that express a belief in what Christ has to offer the world and a conviction that he intends for their local church to grow, generally saw an increase in attendance, whilst those who showed less intentionality generally did not.³⁴⁹ This suggests that if there is one thing that threatens the future of the Church more than anything else, it is not traditional models and understandings, but a general undermining of confidence and belief in God's commitment and intention for his Church, its historical ordering and its sacramental principles.

Gore would fully support such a conclusion and would refute claims to the long-term wisdom of purely experientialist approaches. Recognising the Spirit's work through history, Gore sees biblical texts, authorised creedal formulas, apostolic succession, ministerial orders and sacramental principles remaining consistent in their authority over time. He challenges a theological outlook that bases results on emotional response and personal feelings, encouraging a deeper engagement, with obedience and service to Christ at its core. Gore supports the need for the Church to adapt to its surrounding culture,

³⁴⁸ Church Commissioners for England, *From Anecdote to Evidence: Findings from the Church Growth Research Programme 2011-2013* (London: The Church of England Archbishops' Council, 2014).

³⁴⁹ Church Commissioners for England, *From Anecdote to Evidence* (2014), pp. 21 - 24

but considers that our obedience and commitment to biblical texts, authorised creedal formulas, apostolic succession, ministerial orders and sacramental principles must remain constant if any adaptation is to retain its authenticity and integrity. Holding on to a long term vision, Gore considers that only then will such adaptations prove effective.

This is because Gore sees the Church as the community being brought through the Spirit into relationship with the Trinity. The Church can however adapt where this may be in keeping with the Spirit's guidance, and can certainly change anything that is not conducive to the Spirit's ambitions. Gore emphasises that Christ instituted his Church and that its orders, central teaching and many of its rituals must resist inappropriate corruption from other agendas if it is to faithfully communicate Christ's love to the world.

Recognising that experientialism, driven by an individualistic agenda, can so easily cause the promptings of the Spirit to become confused with personal or collective whim, Gore offers a warning and safeguard. He reminds us that the life of the Spirit is not something entirely new, unseen or unknown, for the life the Spirit breathes is the very life of Jesus himself – the life seen most authentically in and through the Incarnation.³⁵⁰ As a clarificatory remark, he says, 'The Spirit is the life-giver, but the life with which he works is the life of the Incarnate, the life of Jesus'.³⁵¹ In his understanding, the work of the Spirit is and will always be entirely consistent with the orders, teaching and ritual instituted by Christ.

³⁵⁰ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 218

³⁵¹ Gore, *The Church and the Ministry* (1949 [1886]), p. 218

From this perspective, it seems that Gore would be fully supportive of attempts made by the Church to reach out to new generations through such initiatives as the Fresh Expression movement. What he would demand, however, is that such things are done with a high level of intellectual forethought, an understanding of the historical ordering of the Church and with a desire to draw people into and not away from the communal body of the Church, its ordering and its sacraments.

The visible Church, instituted by Christ, infused by the Spirit, under apostolic oversight, ordered through the threefold ministry, drawing individuals through the communal life and sacramental grace to aspire to live according to the incarnation example has but one purpose to Gore's mind:

When the slow-working forces of the incarnation have borne their perfect fruit, it is not Christ the head alone, who will be seen to crown and justify the whole development of the universe, but Christ as the centre of the redeemed humanity, the Head with the body, the Bridegroom with the bride; and things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth shall acknowledge in that triumphant society the consummation of the whole world's destiny.³⁵²

³⁵² Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (1893 [1891]), p. 52

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